*The Buddhist Revolt in Vietnam* by Irving Howe

# DISSENT

BEN SELIGMAN

## THE SPECTRE OF AUTOMATION AND CONSENSUS COMPLACENCY

PAUL JACOBS

## CODE 77—A REPORT FROM WATTS

LEWIS COSER

## THE MYTH OF PEASANT REVOLT

VERA RONY

## BOGALUSA: ECONOMICS OF TRAGEDY

RICHARD FALK

## U.S. IN VIETNAM: RATIONALE & LAW

*Plus*

JOHN SEELEY on "Professors and the Draft"
NORMAN MAILER on "Christians and Cannibals"
CALVIN HERNTON on "Going Back South"
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MAY-JUNE 1966 75c.

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MAY–JUNE 1966

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# COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

Irving Howe

## The Buddhist Revolt in Vietnam

April 12, 1966

Something important is happening in South Vietnam, even if its exact nature is not yet clear. The demonstrations in Saigon and Hue, the consolidation of the Buddhist factions into an apparently united force, the visible weakness of Ky's military government (which, by the time you read these lines, may well have collapsed)—such developments suggest that new political energies are making themselves felt within South Vietnam. At least some sections of the people, acting through or near the Buddhists, are trying to assert control over their destiny, apart from the decisions of one or another big power.

Who are the Buddhists and what do they represent? Clearly they are indigenous to Vietnamese social-political life, and just as clearly there are many political tendencies among them, ranging from those who are ready to make an immediate deal with the Communists to those who would establish a new and independent government in Saigon that could enjoy some freedom of movement *vis à vis* both the United States and the NLF. Writing on April 10, 1966 in the New York *Herald Tribune*, Beverly Deepe reports the views of a leading Buddhist, Thich Tri Quang:

> *He has divided the Vietnamese society into three categories: the Communists and pro-Communists "who exploit Vietnamese nationalism for tactical reasons"; the true Vietnamese nationalists who have been exploited by the French colonialists and the "dictatorial" Diem regime, and are currently exploited by the foreigners as well as by the Communists; and a small minority of "war profiteers" into which he lumps the Vietnamese generals, government officials and Vietnamese traders.*

If this report is at all accurate, it offers a small glimmer of hope. It may indicate a path by which the people of South Vietnam, *acting on their own,* can find a way to avoid the disaster of a prolonged and fruitless war in which South Vietnam would become a mere pawn for the U.S. and the disaster of a reenactment in the South of the totalitarian terror which followed in the countryside of North Vietnam shortly after Ho Chi Minh took power. By now, with a background of decades of corruption and reactionary politics in South Vietnam, it would be fatuous to assume that any policy can offer much hope for a decent solution; but insofar as the Buddhists express the sentiments of a weary and disenchanted people still trying, in what may be the last act of

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desperation, to shape their own life, there is reason for favoring the fullest play of political opinion and even discord in the cities of South Vietnam.

In any long-range valuation of the Vietnam tragedy, it will have to be noticed that the forces making themselves felt in Saigon and Hue have always been there, even if suppressed, confused and ill-structured. They were there in the mid-fifties, unwilling to submit to the dictatorship of Diem or the dictatorship of Ho. Had there been some freedom in South Vietnam after the Geneva agreement, these nationalist and religious groupings could have contributed toward the formation of a viable South Vietnam, the kind of society that would have satisfied the needs of the peasants and the city population, thereby undercutting the Communist appeal. That this did not happen—a major political tragedy—is largely the fault of the United States, a country so blinded by sterile "anti-Communism" and *realpolitik* that it staked its moral-political reputation on a series of petty autocrats ranging from Diem to Ky.

To accept the U.S. perspective of an indefinitely prolonged war becomes less and less palatable to large numbers of non-Communist Vietnamese. They have, apparently, no confidence in U.S. intervention—nor is there any reason why they should. The proposals advanced by the Buddhists therefore seem to make sense: that the present regime desist from all repressive acts against critics and political opponents; that preparations be made immediately for an election within South Vietnam that would have as its goal a civilian government in Saigon; that, in short, the South Vietnamese people begin to take their destiny into their own hands.

Now it is quite possible that one outcome of such a course would be a government in Saigon that would press for a gradual detente with the NLF, aiming at a formal or tacit cease-fire. There would then follow, presumably, negotiations among the rival Vietnamese *themselves*, the creation of a transitional government in which the NLF might be represented, and the holding of elections in which not only the currently recognized political tendencies within South Vietnam but also the NLF would present slates of candidates. Without denying that this course entails the serious risk of a total Communist take-over, and without claiming that it will necessarily lead to results pleasing to liberals and democratic radicals, we believe that it is probably, in the present extreme situation, the best choice.

Not only humane and moral considerations, but simple political realism dictates that the U.S. accept this possibility for ending the war. The U.S. has repeatedly declared that it favors negotiations; it cannot therefore, in logic or conscience, denounce the Buddhists who may, in fact, succeed in negotiating. Nor can it, in logic or conscience, insist that the negotiations be primarily the privilege of outside powers like itself or the Chinese. If the South Vietnamese can resolve their tragic situation in the way indicated by the Buddhists, then the U.S., no matter what anyone may think of the wisdom of the proposed resolution, must accept the outcome. To do anything else would be to insist that we have the right to decide for the South Vietnamese that they would be better

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dead than red; or that we have the right to decide for them which negotiating teams or terms are proper and which are not.

The record of U.S. intervention in Vietnam is a record of disaster, stupidity, reaction. If there are now stirrings among the Vietnamese people to regain control of their political and social life, then these stirrings deserve the support of everyone who wishes this appalling war to come to an end. It is almost certainly too late for completely satisfactory solutions, or anything like them; but it may not yet be too late to avoid complete disaster. Let the South Vietnamese decide, by themselves, what they propose to do with their country!—and right now the Buddhists, or at least some of them, seem to offer a way out.

Paul Feldman

## Free Elections for Dominican Republic

U.S. policy in the Dominican Republic may take a slight turn for the better with the transfer of Ambassador Tapely Bennett to Portugal, a country that shares his antipathy to democracy. The reasons for the current "rethinking" in Washington are complicated. In part, the beginning of a change in U.S. policy is the result of the protests in both the U.S. and Latin America; but perhaps more important is the fact that the disastrous Dominican policy had reached a dangerous impasse. The only alternative to a civil war or a prolonged U.S. military occupation became an election.

Few foreign observers doubt that the democratic leftist party of Juan Bosch will triumph in the Dominican election scheduled for June 1, if it turns out to be honest. But Bosch recently warned: "Who can speak of elections in the present situation? There are many regions of the country where if our PRD members openly declared their political affiliation, they would be killed."

The U.S. military intervention has encouraged the violence it has supposedly undertaken to avoid. Right-wing terrorists have murdered hundreds of Constitutionalist sympathizers. And a leader of the pro-Peking Movimiento Popular Dominicano, Cayetano Rodriguez del Prado, declared at the January Tricontinental Congress in Havana, "We will convert Santo Domingo into the Vietnam of the Caribbean" (quoted in the Dominican magazine *Ahora,* Feb. 14, 1966). The danger exists that the pro-democratic forces grouped around Bosch will be caught in a meat-grinder of

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competing authoritarian forces unless there is a peaceful and democratic resolution

The U.S. role, for good or bad, will be decisive on the question of free elections. It can see to it that the Inter-American Peace Force, made up mostly of American paratroopers, protects the political freedom of *all* Dominican political parties during the campaign. But there are already signs that some Washington policy makers want to use U.S. influence on behalf of their man in Santo Domingo, Joaquin Balaguer.

Every pressure must be put on the Johnson Administration to cease covertly supporting the opponents of Juan Bosch and to keep the Inter-American Peace force politically neutral yet firmly on the side of democratic procedures during the election.

In the next issue *Dissent* will have an on-the-spot report of the situation from Santo Domingo.

**Paul Jacobs**

## Code 77: A Report from Watts

The looted stores are still vacant and the burned-out ones still heaps of rubble. But an ironic and ludicrous quality pervades Watts, for hoardes of investigators, analysts and reporters have descended upon the area with clip boards, tape recorders and questionnaires. At times it seems as if the temporary investigative population of the area outnumbers the real residents.

The Negroes have learned to give "proper responses." Yes, they are bitter, yes, they are resentful, yes, they are the products of a matriarchal family structure in which no work-oriented father image has existed, yes, they aspire to participate in a new value structure and yes, you dumb white motherfuckers, if you keep asking me these damn fool questions, I'll keep giving you these damn fool answers.

Watts has also become a stop for foreign visitors, on State Department tours of the U.S. Each week, two or three such groups troop into some agency office, and the staffs take time out to politely explain the operation to the interpreters, who translate the explanations to the foreign visitors. Then, after an hour or so, with bright smiles and hearty handshakes, the visitors go off, perhaps to Disneyland. Perhaps soon some enterprising Negro will open up a central casting agency so that a constant supply of "resentful" or "hopeful" Negroes will be on hand to satisfy whatever the different scripts require.

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The Watts II script was as nothing compared to Watts I; indeed, if the action hadn't taken place in Watts, it would never have gotten such wide publicity. Watts II was triggered by three incidents: the beating and shooting of two Negroes by a group of Mexican-Americans the night before the trouble broke out, a Negro youth hurling a rock through the window of a white teacher's car, and the killing of a Mexican-American truckdriver by another Negro.

The two Negroes were wounded on a Monday night when they were hit by a shotgun blast from a car with three Mexican-Americans intent on avenging a beating given the brother of two of them earlier that evening. (The brother had gotten into a fight with a Negro man outside a liquor store.) Then on Tuesday afternoon came the rock-hurling incident which resulted in the teacher calling the police, who attempted to arrest the boy allegedly guilty of throwing the rock. A crowd gathered around, the new Los Angeles police call—Code 77—went out, and half of the available police cars in the city sped down to the scene, carrying helmeted officers with shotguns protruding out the windows. Meanwhile the Mexican-American truckdriver was killed by a Negro, and a small group of Negroes began looting a few stores.

Right behind the police came the TV camera crews, the newspaper reporters and photographers intent once more on getting the pictures and stories of another "riot." Rumors spread all over the city, given credence by the TV and radio reports and by the first editions of the newspapers. It was reported, falsely, that the Mexican-American truckdriver had tried to get help at four or five homes after he'd been shot, and had been turned away each time; in fact, he had been killed instantly. Gangs of Negroes were allegedly roaming the downtown streets, beating up whites; in fact, the only incident was a totally unrelated fight between two men on a bus far away from the scene. Mobs of Negroes were supposedly tearing through the streets of Watts, burning and looting; in fact, the streets were totally deserted. One Negro *was* killed on the streets, although it is uncertain whether he was shot by a sniper, as the police claim, or by a cop, as some Negro leaders assert.

By the afternoon of the next day it was all over and everybody gave a sigh of relief, including perhaps even the TV men who saw their good story disappearing. The police were convinced that their prompt action in pouring hundreds of men into the area had solved the problem; the Negro community is equally convinced it was only the prompt action of the Negro leaders in getting the people off the streets that averted a repetition of Watts I. And the Negro leaders are furious at the statements made by John McCone when he blamed them for being irresponsible and causing Watts II. McCone, who had been appointed by Governor Brown to head the commission investigating Watts I, issued statements of the same stupid and vulgar nature that characterized the Commission's report. (In a long career of making pusillanimous decisions, Governor Brown's appointment of McCone as head of the investigating commission

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was a new low. What might have become a thoughtful analysis of the Watts revolt was turned into a device for saving everybody's face.)

Nothing fundamental has changed in Watts. Before August, 1965, the people who lived in the ghetto had to travel hours, if they had no car, to get to the only hospital that served the area. They still have to travel hours because no new transportation system has been brought into the area, so that if you want to get from 103rd and Avalon to the L.A. General Hospital, you must take two or three busses and walk ten or twenty blocks between the bus lines. And no new hospital is being built in the area either; instead, a bond issue has been placed on the June primary ballot to allow the voters to decide whether or not a new hospital should be financed in the area. And the bond issue may very well lose, too.

Nothing has altered the employment situation, either. After the August, 1965 events were over, a service center was opened by the state government in Watts where, for the first time, the people who lived in the area could come to one centralized place to seek jobs and get advice on welfare or housing problems. By the end of March, 14,000 people had applied for work, many of them coming into a government office for the first time in their lives. But jobs had been found for less than 1,300 of the 14,000; and the 1,300 might have been the people who would have found jobs even without the help of the service center. The others, kept from jobs by lack of skills and by arrest records (even though they may not have been convicted), walked out of the center frustrated and bitter.

So, too, the quality of day-to-day life has changed very little in Watts. There were no movie theaters in the area before August and there are none now. There were no teenage recreation facilities before August and there are none now. There were no decent shopping facilities then, and there still aren't any, nor is it likely that there will be; for the insurance companies are insisting that anyone opening a store in the area must pay at least five times the normal premiums.

But a few changes are taking place and they give a little hope, at least. Some of the people whose income is derived from the Bureau of Public Assistance have begun to organize themselves into groups and speak out. Bureau officials from caseworkers to the top administrative echelons have learned that they must listen, too, and that they can even learn something about how their "clients" see the BPA's role. The director of the state service center fights and wins a case for a man who was refused unemployment insurance because he hadn't reported for work and hadn't reported in while he was under arrest, falsely, as it turned out.

But no one knows how many more such men have not received unemployment insurance for the same reason and did not protest, and no one knows how many mothers receiving aid-to-needy-children grants have grievances but don't know how to take them up with the city officials. The southeast part of L.A. has a high percentage of Negroes from the South, cut off from their family ties and uncertain of the

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customs in Los Angeles. And because the Los Angeles ghetto, unlike Harlem or the South Side of Chicago, has little or no community life, just as the city itself has none, the new Negro migrants remain bewildered and uncertain until they turn angry.

Watts II was a minor skirmish, blown up for a short time into the beginning of another Watts I, until, very quickly, it cooled out. But because the anti-poverty program is caught in a morass of local, state and national politics; because the Great Society is demonstrating that, while it can build a field hospital virtually overnight in Vietnam, it may never build one in Watts. And because too many people in Los Angeles think that Code 77, rather than jobs, is the answer, it is almost certain that history will repeat itself. What will Watts III be like? No one knows, but in Watts everybody worries.


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Vera Rony

# BOGALUSA: THE ECONOMICS OF TRAGEDY

The press has done justice to the woeful catalogue of demonstrations, shootings, and court injunctions suffered by this paper-mill town in the past year. There has been little exploration, however, of the causes of Bogalusa's agony: automation, economic frustration, and civic myopia. For Bogalusa is no redneck hamlet, dominated by musty tradition and the paternalism of an entrenched and locally controlled industry. Until recently the town has prospered under the influence of a progressive national corporation and strong Northern-based unions. Yet it was here that the economic urgency of the civil rights movement has most clearly come into focus: Negroes and whites fighting for the same jobs in a work force drastically reduced by technological change.

Bogalusa's anguish was not inspired by the economic demands of its Negroes. It began in December, 1964, when six prominent white residents became concerned because the town's public facilities were still segregated five months after passage of the Civil Rights Act. They invited former Arkansas Congressman Brooks Hays, a racial moderate, now associate director of the Community Relations Service, to speak on the experience of Southern communities in complying with the new law.

When the invitation became public, a cross was burned in front of the home of Reverend Bruce Shepherd, a signer of the invitation, in whose church the meeting was to be held. Several thousand handbills with the following text were distributed door to door:

> [the purpose of this meeting] is to convince you that you should help integration by sitting in church with the black man, hiring more of them in your business, serving and eating with them in your cafes, and allowing your children to sit by filthy, runny-nosed, ragged, ugly little niggers in your public schools. We will know the names of all who are invited to the Brooks Hays meeting and we will know who did and did not attend this meeting. . . . Those who do attend [will be] dealt with accordingly by the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

A few days later, the vestrymen of St. Matthews Episcopal Church voted seven to one against opening the parish hall for the Hays meeting;

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their insurance did not cover bombing. And on January 5, the invitation to Hays was withdrawn. "We searched our souls day and night," said Shepherd, a former combat bombardier in Korea. "Cars filled with Klansmen kept going by our houses. We didn't want to give in to the Klan. But we had no one with us. We didn't have labor, business, city officials, or the law. We were just six guys bucking the whole town."

•

Why was it that Bogalusa, like Sodom, could not produce ten good men in a crisis? A partial answer is to be found in the brief but contradictory history of the town itself. In 1906, the Great Southern Lumber Company decided that Bogue Lusa—Choctaw for "smoky water" —would make an ideal location for the world's largest sawmill, to be surrounded by a town "laid out with . . . care and provision for the future." This care and provision included company houses, utilities, hospital, YM- and YWCA. But within fourteen years the monster mill, consuming fifty acres a day, had almost depleted the surrounding forests. Great Southern responded by instituting the first large-scale reforestation program in the history of the Southern lumber industry. By 1938, however, the local timber resources proved inadequate, and the company sold out to the Gaylord Container Corporation, a paper-products firm that in 1955 merged with the much larger Crown Zellerbach Corporation.

Crown knew little about the South when it came to Bogalusa. Its headquarters are in San Francisco and its 26,000 employees are scattered for the most part across the Pacific States. Since 1955, its sales have risen 58 per cent, to $622 million, making it the second largest paper-products manufacturer in the country. But in this highly competitive industry, this means only 4 per cent of the market. It also means continual plant modernization to keep pace with the industry's rapid technological change; by 1957, Crown had already built a new bag plant in Bogalusa.

Bringing the same progressive spirit to bear on its relations with the community, Crown began divesting itself of such utilities, houses, and stores still under traditional company control. But in 1960, the demands of competition collided with those of communal harmony. As Board Chairman Reed O. Hunt later explained: ". . . to make the mill fully competitive in the industry it had to be extensively modernized. . . . It was also clear that the mill was greatly overstaffed and that the work force would have to be reduced. . . . We made every effort to explain the situation to the union but tension inevitably developed."

This tension erupted in August, 1961, into a strike that lasted seven months. The company insists that, while it was a costly strike for all concerned, there was no residue of bitterness. But Paul Phillips, inter-

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national president of the United Papermakers and Paperworkers, which maintains white and Negro locals in Bogalusa, hotly disagrees: "All that consultation stuff is malarkey. The company made those decisions unilaterally—that's why we struck. Our people felt the rug had been pulled out from under them."

Between 1961 and 1965, Crown spent more than $35 million on plant modernization and laid off 500 Bogalusans, black and white. There was no program, city-, company-, or union-sponsored, to attract new industry or to retrain displaced workers. They were merely placed in Crown's pool of unassigned labor, known as the Extra Board, where from time to time they could find temporary work. Since the Extra Board was segregated in 1961, displaced Negroes had access only to the most menial jobs. Nevertheless, unemployed whites were shocked to find themselves confronting Negroes in the same predicament—and in the context of a civil rights movement determined to destroy the social equilibrium upon which they depended.

In this tense social climate Crown Zellerbach confronted Executive Order 10925, signed by President Kennedy in March, 1961, requiring all firms under government contract to provide equal-employment opportunities for their workers. Crown waited more than a year before it moved, and moved, by its own admission, only its mouth. "We were aware that this was the first initiative in Bogalusa to alter the accepted pattern of race relations in the community and that we were taking it after a prolonged labor dispute," Chairman Hunt recalled for the stockholders. "... We felt it was essential to move ahead on the basis of a patient and thorough explanation. . . ."

In doing so, Crown ignored the experience of other Southern firms which have desegregated without incident: namely, that once a policy of integration is announced, a clear-cut procedure pursued with reasonable speed is far less inflammatory than a "patient and thorough explanation" —particularly if it lasts a year and a half! This lengthy study period was not, however, entirely Crown's responsibility. The other major parties were the white paper unions; their sentiments were immovable. When the company invited Victor Bussie, president of the Louisiana AFL-CIO Council, to assist in these discussions, these Unionists told him to go home. Bussie, one of the South's most effective labor leaders, was somewhat nonplussed by the United Papermakers and Paperworkers and the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Papermill Workers, who share jurisdiction over the 2,900 workers at Crown and another 13,000 in the state: "The state council has managed to keep the allegiance of most locals throughout the integration crisis, but not the

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paper unions; 45 per cent of them have disaffiliated. Most of these locals are in small towns, and the bulk of their membership consists of farmers who quit the land recently or one generation back. It's the most fundamental kind of Southern conservatism, the hardest kind to reason with."

There was another, though silent, partner to this company-union talkathon which lasted from the spring of 1962 until December, 1963—the General Services Administration, which had awarded several lucrative Federal contracts to Crown. During this period, the agency completed twenty-four reviews of the company's fair-employment practices and found them in compliance with government policy. GSA obviously based its approval on the company's *plans* for integration, since the plant remained totally segregated. But finally, in early 1964, Washington began to prod Crown into action.

Separate plant entrances for Negroes and whites were abolished, along with separate drinking fountains (which now have long spouts and paper cups). The toilets, always a hazard, were integrated but with partitions between the white and Negro sections. Only after violence erupted last year did the company try to desegregate its restaurant. But no sooner did the Negroes arrive than the whites left, and the private concessionaire was forced to close. The integration of time clocks was delayed until 1965, and, although the signs have been removed from the pay windows, Negroes are still to queue up at their old windows.

However, Crown's most significant act was to integrate its Extra Board in May, 1964, enabling Negroes as well as whites to be assigned to jobs on the basis of seniority. But the company frankly concedes that the impact of this innovation was limited: "Due to the manpower situation in the mill, the labor turnover since the policy was put into effect has not been great. Consequently, few Negroes have been able to obtain permanent jobs in progression lines formerly set aside for whites. Few whites have moved into jobs formerly held by Negroes."

To the white workers the integration of the Extra Board, after three years of reduced employment caused by automation, was the nightmare of Negro competition come true. The Klan lost no time exploiting the fear of job loss to Negroes; its ranks increased during 1964 to an estimated 800 members in a population of 22,000, reportedly the highest concentration in the South. And to job anxiety was added the agitation for civil rights legislation, the national outcry at the murders of Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman, and finally, the passage of the Civil Rights Act, Title VII which guaranteed the widening of the fair-employment breach so cautiously opened by Crown Zellerbach.

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About noon on July 3, 1964, the day after the Civil Rights Act became law, two Negro girls, about twelve years old, sat down at the lunch counter of Woolworth's and requested service. Within an hour, a hundred white men had assembled in front of the store; they remained there until dark, although the children had long since fled.

In the rare, fortunate Southern community, a danger signal like this is promptly answered by a firm call for law and order from the powers that be. Here, the mantle rested on Crown Zellerbach, whose $19 million annual payroll provides 70 per cent of Bogalusa's income and which employs two of the town's four commissioners and several of its councilmen. But the company chose to remain silent. So did Mayor Jesse F. Cutrer, the protégé of Vertrees Young, a prominent local moderate and retired Crown vice-president. The resounding stillness extended into December before it was broken by the ill-fated invitation to Brooks Hays. When the Klan responded by intimidating the entire community, it ignited the racial confrontation that still continues.

At the time, the vigilante victory in forcing the withdrawal of the invitation was complete—inside Bogalusa. But the Hays episode was widely reported by the press, and Crown's switchboard in San Francisco was soon deluged with calls from news media, irate citizens, and government officials. The company no longer hesitated to make its influence felt; a few days later Mayor Cutrer notified the Bogalusa Civic and Voters League, which represents the Negro community, that his police would provide full protection for the testing of public accommodations, starting on January 28, 1965.

The first day of testing went smoothly, and Mayor Cutrer, clearly relieved, declared the tests successful—and concluded. But the Voters League, fired up by indignation, publicity, and hope, scheduled a rally to launch a systematic assault on all of Bogalusa's segregated facilities.

"That was February 1st, and the [Negro] Union Hall was packed. People in the aisles, in back, everywhere," Jacqueline Hicks, a leading militant, recalls. "Bill Yates and Steve Miller of CORE were telling us how much we could do in Bogalusa if only we stuck together and kept fighting. . . . We never had a meeting like that in this town before."

Meanwhile equal excitement was stirring on Columbia Road, the town's main street, where white men were assembling and talking about the two white "outsiders" from CORE bringing trouble to Bogalusa.

Yates and Miller had arrived at the Robert Hicks's home on East Ninth Street, where they were to spend the night. At 11:15 p.m., Chief of Police Claxton Knight came to inform them that he could no longer guarantee their safety in Bogalusa; he advised them to leave at once.

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It was a paralyzing moment for the Hickses: their two youngest children were at home, and it had not been easy to finance their pleasant, sprawling ranch house. "But we didn't even have to remember Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman. We just knew that if Yates and Miller left our house at that moment, we would never see them alive again," Bob Hicks recalls. Informed that the two CORE workers would stay, Chief Knight took his leave with a parting warning: "We have better things to do than protect people who aren't wanted here."

While CORE, alerted by Yates and Miller, reached out frantically for help from Washington, word of the impending siege at the Hickses flashed through Jewtown, Poplas, Moden Quarters, and other widely separated Negro sections. Within minutes, carloads of armed Negroes poured into East Ninth Street. Now the rumors began to travel the other way; the Klan never came near East Ninth Street. The Movement had finally arrived in Bogalusa.

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These events still did not elicit a law-and-order statement from Crown or the unions. Not until April 2 did the local Crown manager speak out against violence and intimidation, a reticence the company explained by insisting that civil rights is a community responsibilty.

The international unions made no statement at all; nor did their locals take advantage of the mediation efforts of the AFL-CIO's Bussie, who returned to Bogalusa in April to help establish communications between the town officials and the Voters League, now under new leadership.

This changing of the guard is a frequent occurrence in the civil rights struggle. The old preacher-teacher-insurance-agent leadership of the Voters League lacked the nerve for the aggressive enterprises of Bogalusa's aroused Negroes. By April, A. Z. Young had assumed the presidency and Bob Hicks the vice-presidency of the organization. Both men had developed their skills in the service of Local 624, the Negro wing of the Pulp, Sulphite Union: Young was the local's president for a decade; Hicks was a trustee for years. Their union experience equipped them to voice those fundamental economic grievances that do not surface in every civil rights battle but could hardly be surpressed in Bogalusa, where the median income for Negro families is $2,200 a year.

The Voters League launched a vigorous campaign for more and better jobs—whose thrust was naturally directed at Crown. The League pounded away at the statistics: 9,000, or one out of three, Bogalusans are Negroes; yet of Crown's 2,900 employees, Negroes account for a mere 390, or one out of seven, and they are grouped in the poorest paid and

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least skilled jobs. At Crown as elsewhere, the demand for more jobs is inseparable from that for better jobs, since Negroes cannot hope to become a significant part of the work force without access to skilled jobs.

The Voters League's first proposal was jobs for women, who presently lack any alternative to working as maids for $18 a week. Crown which employed 200 white women, did not have a single Negro woman on the payroll. But the League's fundamental demand was access to better-paid skilled jobs. "I came to Crown in 1950," said Otha Peters, the current president of Negro Local 624, "the same time as Hilton Beard, the president of our white local. I couldn't go beyond porter, so I make $2.16 an hour, while Hilton, who is a millwright, makes $3.45. Sometimes we talk about it, and Hilton says, 'You should've been born a white boy.' "

When Chairman Hunt announced the integration of the Extra Board, he acknowledged the limitations imposed on this policy by the low labor turnover, due to automation and reduced sales, which left the plant operating at half capacity. And he did not mention that only nine Negroes had moved into formerly white job lines during the first year of integration. Pedro Mondy, official of Negro Papermakers Local 189A, said it could hardly be otherwise: "Take the recovery room in the paper mill. There are twenty-two jobs; before '64, the top seventeen were restricted to whites, the bottom five to Negroes. Now supposing that after the company announced the integration, the senior Negro wants to move into a white job, which he knows how to handle 'cause he's done it in emergencies. He's got to leave *his* job, give up his seniority, go into the Extra Board, pass a tough test, and then wait his turn on the Extra Board. If he does get the job, he'll be the first one laid off. And if it's more than six weeks since he left his old job, he can't go back—he's out of luck."

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Repeated conferences during the first half of 1965 between the company, the unions, the Voters League, and local officials failed to produce a single new job for a Negro in Bogalusa. The pace of demonstrations accelerated, as did the physical attacks by white men and the jeering by their women and children. On June 2, Washington Parish Deputy Sheriff O'Neal Moore, a Negro, was slain by night riders. On July 8, Henry Austin of the black Deacons for Defense shot a white man who attacked a Negro child during a demonstration. Nearly 100 people were arrested during those hectic weeks. And on July 10, CORE obtained a Federal injunction ordering the police to provide full protection to civil rights workers (subsequent injunctions have been issued

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against local officials, the Klan, and individual members of the police).

Five days after the injunction, Crown Vice-President Francis M. Barnes flew from San Francisco to confer with the Bogalusa Voters League. It was a pilgrimage at least partially motivated by the prodding of the GSA, which had just awarded Crown a new $12 million contract.

Confronting Barnes were three Negro women who had applied at Crown and "been turned around so often" that they kept asking local plant manager Roy Ferguson to repeat his assurance that henceforth the applications of Negro women would be accepted. Next followed an illuminating exchange between management and Bob Hicks:

> *Ferguson:* "All jobs are open, Mr. Hicks, at this time. They may not have been open in the past."
>
> *Hicks:* "Not all jobs are open because they have some jobs for colored and some for whites as of today. My job is predominantly colored. I put in for this other [paste machine operator] my experience. I had done this job for a number of years before this automation came in. These [white] men had no experience, yet they were selected and put on that job. And then the same thing . . . you must take a test. It doesn't require a test for a man to do work that he has been doing for years. And in the department where I work, they bring white men in on these jobs that have training in other departments . . . yet we have to show them or they can't make it. . . . But the job I'm in, no white men have ever worked in it. . . . Yet and still, you turn right around and hire these [white] men that did not pass the test to come to work in the job that is especially for Negroes. Now these are the facts."
>
> *Crown Lawyer:* "Would you go over that again?"
>
> (The tests that Hicks referred to were instituted in January, 1963, after the company's announced intention of complying with Presidential Executive Order 10925.)
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> *League Lawyer:* "An employee told me that an examination for a manual labor category contained a question: 'If a man was fishing for two hours and caught three fish, if he fished the next day for five hours, how many fish would he catch?' "
>
> *Barnes:* "What did he use for bait?" (Laughter)
>
> *Hicks:* "Since the white man was hired before the test [was instituted] and promoted in the line of progression and wasn't subject to a test, why subject a man to a test now because he is black?"

As Robert F. Collins, one of the League's attorneys, said in summation: "The real issue is what, if anything, the company is willing to do to compensate for the past discrimination. To merely say that at this point you are going to be fair is not enough." This is the view that most appalls the company and the white unions.

No company answer was forthcoming or expected at this meet-

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ing, although Negroes credit it with two improvements later negotiated with Local 624: Negroes need no longer leave their old jobs and enter the Extra Board to apply for formerly white jobs, and they retain seniority on their old job in the event of return. But later, Delos Knight, Crown's public relations officer in Bogalusa, spoke quite frankly about the League's demands: "Papermaking is still an art. Despite all the new machines, men still have to hold the paper up to the light to see if it's okay. You can't turn the whole plant upside down and fire the people already working for you in order to right the wrongs of the past. There is no instant solution. This company cannot be expected to solve these problems by itself. The government will have to lay down industry-wide guidelines." President Phillips of the Papermakers put it in even stronger terms: "Even in all-white plants in the North, the top machine jobs take five years of training. You can't do more than start Negroes and whites in *all* job lines. . . . If you try to place every man according to seniority, you'll have to shut down the mill. The whites won't stand for it."

Thus the economic tragedy of Bogalusa, planted by automation and nurtured by the indecision, delay, and timorousness of Crown Zellerbach and the unions, has become by default the problem of the federal government. Until recently, the voices of Knight and Phillips seemed to echo more loudly in Washington than those of Bogalusa's Negroes. Despite warm expressions of interest from the President's Commission on Fair Employment Practices, the last five months of 1965 saw no increase in the number of Negroes in white job lines at Crown. On December 18, the commission finally acted. Chairman Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., conferred in New Orleans with top officials of Crown and the Negro and white locals of the United Papermakers. He extracted a pledge from both locals to accept full integration of functionally related job lines, according to seniority, without bars to competent Negroes.

Though the details remain to be settled, the agreement appears to be a major triumph for law enforcement and for Bogalusa's Negroes. But this triumph may be more apparent than real. "Sure," the agreement sounds good," says Bob Hicks. "But three days after it was made, a Negro recently promoted into a white job line found twenty hooded Klansmen waiting for him in the company parking lot, about ten yards from the mill entrance. They told him he'd better quit, and he did. The company said it couldn't do a thing about it. A few days ago, a Negro high school senior in a formerly all-white school was beaten up for the third time; he wants to quit, too. But Crown still won't discuss any community problems with the Voters League. And as long as the Company keeps these attitudes, Bogalusa's troubles will continue."

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Ben B. Seligman

# ON THEORIES OF AUTOMATION

## A Polemic Against Daniel Bell and Others

That the machine does in fact displace workers had been directly experienced during the Industrial Revolution by hand loom weaver and Luddite. Yet economists have always persisted in consoling workers with the optimistic notion that in the long run new techniques increase output sufficiently to create jobs for the displaced. Unfortunately, they failed to add that the process might take decades; in the meantime, the displaced have had to get along as best they could.

Now, before we begin with our analysis, let me offer several observations to avoid misunderstanding. What concerns us here is the problem of automation in the perspective of long-term change. No doubt many of the effects of technical change may be overcome by a high rate of economic growth. Yet it is dubious that the promotion of growth by the economic orthodoxy of neo-Keynesianism can eliminate the entire residue of human and economic problems engendered by technology. Certainly not during peacetime—as evidenced by the experience of the early 1940's, the 1950's, and the present. Keynes himself once remarked: "*It is, it seems, politically impossible for a capitalist democracy to organize expenditure on the scale necessary to . . . prove my case—except in war conditions.*" While the American economy expanded during the post-war years, each recession left a residue of hard core unemployed that could be reduced only when we had gone to war. Fiscal policy, the generalized solution of the Keynesians, has been used in recent years with some reward: the tax cut in 1964 generated about $20 billion in real GNP, accompanied by a fall in the unemployment rate to 5 per cent of the work force, or by 400,000. But this did not create a full complement of new jobs for those fresh in the labor force: it took heated skirmishes in Vietnam plus a variety of special federal programs, such as the Neighborhood Youth Corps, to jack up GNP in the first three quarters of 1965 by over $20 billion in real dollars and to create 800,000 jobs for persons drawn back into the

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labor force or in it for the first time.* What this suggests is that in the absence of war, fiscal policy, though a necessary condition for a viable economy, will nevertheless not be a sufficient one. And whereas war may be an "easy" solution, it is hardly one that commands our appeal. Further, there is always the prospect of banging up against ceilings—the old question of inflation. But that would require another article.

In any case, we have always had optimists who see no real issues at hand. For them there have never been any real difficulties, any genuine hardships stemming from technical change. Basing their arguments on the ineffable harmonies of Jean-Baptiste Say, a French disciple of Adam Smith, they have argued that production expands indefinitely and thus creates its own effective demand. First, improved productivity reduces costs; therefore, *under conditions of a competitive market,* lower prices necessarily ensue. Even if a consumer does not respond to reduced prices for particular commodities, his additional real income would in any case be available for purchasing other goods. Furthermore, if some prices are "sticky" and do not fall, the higher profits garnered by capitalists will impel *them* either to consume more on their own behalf or to expand investment. Thus the requisite demand is bound to be created as a result of the unimpeded circular flow of income.

Over the years, proponents of this comfortable doctrine have pointed to the increase in the employed work force as incontrovertible support of the proposition that the production of goods itself generates a demand for goods: moreover, to increase the quantity of any one good creates an increase—however small or large—in the demand for all other goods. There were a number of variations on the theme: if the quantity demanded increased proportionately to the fall in costs stemming from

* There are some who doubt that the war in Vietnam has had any serious impact on the present situation. However, the evidence is ample, as revealed in James Reston's column in the *New York Times* (Jan. 28, 1966), and in the President's Economic Message. The latter admitted that some $9 billion of GNP could be traced to the war, which had by now become "an important new force in the economy." Reston remarked: "The war in Vietnam has not produced the economic boom but has kept it going." He added: "This is a poor man's war. It is just big enough to catch the high school dropout." While a third of 1965's growth in GNP stemmed from price increases, the balance clearly came from spending. As *Fortune* pointed out (Feb. 1966), the second half of 1965 saw defense contracts increase by a fourth over the previous year. Much of the work was handed out to contractors on emergency letters of intent in anticipation of Congressional approval. Hence the economic impact of war orders was much greater than Pentagon bookkeeping figures would suggest. Subsequent appropriations merely sustained the Defense Department's spending rate. Industrial inventories revealed the same trend; the sharpest rise was in precisely those industries feeding the war machine—aircraft, machinery, ordinance. At present such inventory accumulation is at the rate of over 15 per cent a year.

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improved technique, then the same number of workers as were previously employed would still be required to produce the additional output; and if demand responded more than in proportion to cost changes, more workers would be employed. But what if demand were inelastic? Would not unemployment result? Here conventional wisdom came to the rescue, for, it was argued, invested savings would supply jobs. As Paul Douglas stated the case back in 1930: "At the same time that men are being squeezed out of [one] business, purchasing power formerly expended upon the products of this industry is transferred to other industries and builds up added opportunities to work there." Even more miraculously, the creation of jobs in such other industries would exactly balance the losses suffered elsewhere in the economy. "For every man laid off, a new job has been created somewhere."[1]

The strongest attack on this comfortable theory was mounted by Marx, in whose system technology appeared as a fundamental disruptive force. Accumulation, said Marx, involved changes in the organic composition of capital, or an increase in the ratio of constant capital to labor input. Disturbances were inevitable because constant capital in the producers' goods sector rose faster than the output of consumers' goods. The assumption here was that changes in the organic composition of capital stemmed only from labor-saving equipment: however, had Marx accepted capital-saving as a real possibility, he might have acknowledged other sorts of technological effects.

Orthodox theory was then rescued by the marginalists, who restated equilibrium in a way that seemed difficult to refute. A more intensive accumulation of capital, said the new theorists, would overcome breaks that threatened the income cycle. In fact, when unemployment did occur, they argued, it was simply because wages were inflexible, a condition resulting from labor union resistance or other institutional barriers. When a new technique entailed alterations in the production function—the relationship of inputs to outputs—it necessarily established new marginal productivities. Thus, if the unemployed would accept jobs at a low enough wage they could effectively inhibit mechanization by the simple expedient of outbidding the machine. So comforting was this theory that it found its way quite readily into neoclassical doctrine. Thus, under conditions of perfect competition, the easy adjustment of wage rates to shifts in demand would assure everyone of a job regardless of the dynamism of technology or the gyrations of the business cycle. These notions later became the object of Keynes' scorn and he demolished them, presumably for all time, with a powerful

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demonstration that low-level equilibrium could exist together with high unemployment.

## II

The conventional wisdom seeks to convince us that the present is analogous to the past. In the 18th century, England's Industrial Revolution did foreshadow a long upward spiral, and there was some unskilled work for the displaced to move into—usually at lower wages. Yet unemployment was not absent even then; the troubled times of the 1830's and 1840's brought virtual starvation to many workers. In the 19th century the attitude of the industrialists was extraordinarily callous. The machine was frequently described as a weapon to subdue the worker by promising to displace him unless he accepted the terms offered by the businessman. Thus, the loom and the lathe were to be used as instruments for discipline, as advocated by Andrew Ure, England's "philosopher" of the factory; Ure visualized manufacturing as an "automaton" that would undermine the position of the "cunning workman."

Today's technology also imposes severe burdens—on young people without skills, on Negroes, on those displaced by the machine. Despite these problems, most economists continue to assert that "automation is not an industrial revolution . . . it is a completely normal evolution in which progress is being made in all fields of industry by the application of advanced . . . techniques," and that Say's Law or some variant of it will take care of the dispossessed. Furthermore, it is argued, there are certain limits to automation.

With the major motivation stemming from a desire to reduce labor costs, automation frequently brings about unexpected savings. John Diebold cites the case of a chemical company which estimated that for every dollar of labor savings, it also saved three dollars by operating more efficiently and with less waste through automation.[2] Some have argued that the high cost of the new technology inhibits any thrust toward its rapid development. But the initial cost of automating a plant is not so great as generally supposed. The price of making a plant fully automatic varies from one industry to the next, but the average for all industries, according to Wassily Leontief, is only about 6 per cent of total plant cost, hardly an insuperable barrier. Automation does not require the relatively heavy investment that was necessary for industrialization in the 19th and 20th centuries, and it can therefore proceed at a fairly rapid rate, as indeed it has.

Where automation has developed slowly, as in steel and textiles,

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the reason may be attributed to the cautious and conservative attitudes of management. Nevertheless, once the Europeans and the smaller American firms had demonstrated the technical and economic feasibility of continuous casting, oxygen furnaces and computer controlled processes, the others hastened their pace. The conservatism of the American corporate oligarch was dissipated once the Germans, Swedes and Japanese had demonstrated that their methods were superior.

These are the forces to which conventionality is blind. Technology indeed moves quickly. James Bright of Harvard has said that even in 1958 when he reviewed the advances made in 13 factories whose methods he had studied but three years earlier, he was startled to discover the older technology overtaken and surpassed. By 1960, said Bright, it was evident that a "technological ferment was burgeoning. The growth of the computer [had] exceeded all but the wildest expectations. The numerically controlled machine tool, for example, was far more useful than most of us had believed."[3]

There has been no lack of bromides. Automation it is said, helps fill the cupboards, gives us new foods, provides home conveniences, and gives lots of time to "do-it-yourself" around the house. The more sophisticated optimist will argue that the effects of automation on employment are nothing new, that these problems can be solved if the correct policies are utilized, and that as we achieve the latter, automation will prove to be a blessing. While automation may destroy certain jobs, says Gardner Ackley, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, we must consider the job-creating ability of the economy as a whole. The proof of this lies in our history: a technological society has always offered more work, better income, superior goods, and greater leisure time. Yet by Ackley's own admission, we would have needed several million new jobs during 1964 and 1965 to get the unemployment rate under 4 per cent of the work force.[4] This could be done only under the high pressure of "defense" expenditures. In the absence of the latter, the official rate of unemployment hovered about the 5 per cent mark: the unofficial figure may have been closer to 9 per cent.

A good many writers on automation agree with E. W. Leaver, an electronics specialist, and Robert Solo, an economist, who argue that automation does not result in job displacement, since it has been developing rather slowly. In fact, Solo says, "No general statistical evidence has been adduced in support of the alleged importance of automation as a component of technological progress in industry . . ."[5]

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Its effect, he continues, is essentially minor, and there is no instance where computer-based methods in production are of more than trivial significance. It is rather difficult to deal with such statements, deeply rooted as they are in ignorance of current technology. How trivial the computer is in production is revealed in the petrochemical industry, in the new steel plants, in machine tool operations and in the materials handling devices linked to sensory apparatuses, to say nothing of data-processing.

## III

It is interesting to note that Daniel Bell—whose writings on work and technology have up to now been very sensible—has fallen in with the camp of the complacents.[6] He quotes approvingly the arguments of Charles Silberman of *Fortune* that automation is no problem since no major industry is at present fully automated. By this Silberman had in mind the adoption of process control computers, but he failed to tell his readers that the 300 such installations in 1965 had grown from a handful a decade prior and were expected by industry sources to reach 4000 by 1970. This may be illustrative only—Bell calls it argument by "for example"—but it does suggest the magnitude and direction of the trend. And to deny, as Bell does, that discrete production can be converted into a continuous flow and thus subjected to computer control simply reveals a lack of knowledge or understanding, or both, of what is now occurring in the factory. All Bell can do is to repeat arguments heard at Automation Commission sessions—that the new technology is just more of the kind of change we've had since the Industrial Revolution; that its pace is not accelerating; and that we need a higher level of aggregate demand to ease whatever strains it causes. Now, few economists will deny the last proposition, but some have been concerned that high aggregate demand often is not available—in peace time. Consequently, they understandably cast about for alternative methods of alleviating unemployment. That Bell now apparently rejects the irony of a solution dependent on war production suggests another kind of conventional wisdom.

In an effort to demonstrate that automation is not really "biting in," Bell resorts to a Department of Labor report which purportedly analyzed the effects of the computer in 36 different industries. In his interpretation of the "data," it appears that the computer's applicability is limited. When one looks at IBM, Rand, RCA and all the others in the business of selling computers for data processing and process control, one wonders what Bell means. Curiously, in both his original

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article and subsequent response to his correspondents, Bell refused to identify the report on which he had relied. Donald Michael, one of those who responded to Bell, inquired at the Department of Labor and they couldn't say which report it was that Bell was referring to. If it is indeed the study I have in mind, then Bell can be charged with an artfulness that he has never revealed before. For the report which I believe he cited had nothing to do with the *specific* application of the computer in the 36 industries reviewed but with probable technological trends in the broadest sense of the term. But a more important consideration is that the authors of the report have conceded its extreme unreliability. The document had been quickly prepared at the request of a Presidential Committee that was holding hasty one-day briefing sessions a few years ago and the compilers had to rush to meet a deadline without any really intensive check of their data.

Central to Bell's argument is the contention that technology manifests no accelerated development. This is a knotty problem. The point is that once again economic analysis is insufficient: one must have recourse to other bits of information such as the study of innovations, diffusion and the like. The Automation Commission thought that it was worthwhile to investigate these aspects, but Bell, a member of the Commission, simply ignores the reports submitted to that group. To quote from an early Commission draft: ". . . the time between initial technical discovery and recognition of its commercial potential had declined from about 30 years before the first World War to 16 years between the wars and 9 years for the post-World War II period." If the speed at which we can cross the earth's surface is a reflection of the rate of invention and innovation, then clearly the pace has been intensified. Between 1829 and the present, the automobile, the railroad and the jet airplane have added more to man's ability to move than in all the eons that went before. It took the crowned heads of Europe about three days to get to London for the funeral of Edward VII in 1910; the death of President Kennedy brought dignitaries to Washington from the six continents in under 24 hours. If the ability to kill large masses of people in war is a rough index of rapid technological change, then surely there has been exponential growth between a 15th century cannon and the hydrogen bomb. Indeed, acceleration in technology feeds upon itself, devouring earlier techniques and machines in great gulps. Quick obsolescence has become a datum of industrial endeavor. Univac I, the world's first data processing computer, was retired to a museum by the U.S. Census Bureau in 1963 after operating continously for but twelve years because it was now much too slow and too small.

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Granted that innovation depends on the use and disuse of older equipment, mistakes, luck, available capital and labor, and the like, the fact is that invention and innovation today spread more quickly than ever. Symposia and professional associations eagerly pass the gospel along, and no less an authority than George Sarton declared as far back as 1936 that scientific progress was being accomplished in shorter and shorter periods. If the interval between an invention and its adoption is a measure of acceleration, then surely technology has developed more rapidly in our own time. In the 18th century adoption followed invention for almost all the important machines within a decade or less. Somewhat longer intervals appear to have characterized the first half of the 19th century: perhaps more time was needed for digestion. But in the second half, about 50 per cent of the strategic inventions were adopted within a decade or less: in the first quarter of the 20th century about 60 per cent became viable innovations within a decade; and in the second quarter the ratio rose to 70 per cent. Such swift change is not merely a matter of degree as some writers contend; for as Norbert Wiener once remarked, the difference between a large fatal dose of strychnine and a medicinal one is also a question of degree.

It seems to be an article of faith these days that the easiest way to assuage the concern of those who wonder what the new technology —automation or cybernation or whatever one calls it—will do to our society is to offer some simple numbers. These are the productivity figures, said to be *the* measure of technological change. After all, why worry—the data show only relatively modest growth over the long haul.

But Bell seems unaware of the conceptual morass that passes for productivity measurement. The extrapolation to the entire economy of the indexes for a handful of the over 400 industries that comprise the manufacturing sector alone is hardly a foolproof measure of what goes on in the "total private economy." For almost a third of production workers there are no data for physical quantities, making any index pure guesswork. And in the service sectors—such as retailing, which employs over 8 million people—there are no official productivity indexes at all. Yet Bell takes at face value the gabble about "modest productivity growth in the private domestic economy." To be sure, economists use the numbers, but they know they must handle them gingerly: only when they are ready to propagandize for the establishment does caution suddenly disappear. In any case, it is clear from the evidence that the pace of productivity increase for the total private economy was higher in the post-war period than in the previous four decades—3 per cent a year from 1947 to 1963 as compared with about 2

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per cent a year from 1909-1947. "For example may be no proof," as Bell quips, but one looks with wonder and awe at the auto industry's output in 1964—almost 8 million vehicles produced with a sixth fewer workers than used for a similar output in 1955.

Nor does Bell see clearly the relationships that hold between gross national product, productivity and employment, despite the apparent ease with which he describes these terms. The issue is really not so difficult if one expresses unemployment as the difference between the total labor force and those employed. Stated this way, the equation appears rather banal. It is necessary, however, to "decompose" the latter into a more subtle expression—employment equals the Gross National Product divided by the product of productivity and available man-hours per year, in a simple formula:

$$E = L\frac{GNP}{P \times H}$$

The objective of policy would then be to increase the value of the last expression in order to reduce the gap between it and the total labor force. Hence there are *three* elements involved—changes in GNP, productivity, and man-hours. Standard neo-Keynesianism focuses mainly on GNP and depreciates any other policy.

There is no necessary correlation between advances in GNP and productivity, as Bell seems to believe. Given the effect on capital-output ratios that the new technology appears to be exerting, it is entirely possible for productivity to increase with less than a proportionate change in output. When this happens, assuming no alteration in hours, labor displacement can be the only consequence. The situation is worsened during a downturn in economic activity, even a slight one, for technological achievement is irreversible. There is no turning back to simpler modes of production; if productivity is enhanced while output remains intact, jobs will tend to drop. This indeed has been the situation in manufacturing: productivity in that sector has been rising faster than output. Thus, for every unit increase in the latter, we obtain less employment than in earlier times, a phenomenon noted by the Labor Department's productivity expert, Leon Greenberg, last October.

But Bell looks magisterially at the data and concludes that the rise in productivity in the private economy has been quite modest. The implication is that there was no cause for concern in the recent past: aggregate demand will sop up any unemployment. And, of course, it appears that such is the case at the moment, given the sort of business

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we now have in Asia. But suppose peace should really break out? Are we so cocksure about the kind of fiscal policies we can make politically palatable to rely solely on neo-Keynesian devices? Even Bell's modest percentages have a compound effect. As the Automation Commission acknowledged, a one per cent rate of increase doubles productivity in 72 years; a 2 per cent rate in 36 years; and a 3 per cent rate in 23 years. And what if the rate of increase in productivity rises faster than 3 per cent, as it has in manufacturing in the last five years?

As if to avoid the consequences of such simple arithmetic, Bell—as well as other writers, among them Herbert Simon of Carnegie Tech and Robert Solow of MIT—offers the disingenuous comment that agriculture accounted for most of the recent gains anyway. But this is to insist that the tail wags the dog. Agriculture, which has enjoyed a productivity gain in recent years of about 6 per cent per annum, provided about 4 per cent of GNP. Now, the total annual gain in GNP due to productivity advances approximates $18 billion. We are then asked to believe that agriculture's under $2 billion productivity advance explains the $18 billion figure! There would have had to be a rise of productivity in agriculture of 15 to 20 per cent before one could assert with confidence that the pace for the entire private economy was affected markedly by agriculture's 6 per cent rise. But the artfulness goes further: productivity in manufacturing, say Bell and Solow, was really only 2.5 per cent per annum, although the Automation Commission, of which both were members, admits that it is really 3 per cent and that for production and maintenance workers in the last five years the pace had stepped up to 3.4 per cent a year. These are not quibbles, since a jump from 3.0 per cent to 3.4 per cent is one-seventh and from 2.5 to 3.0 one-fifth.

What is important is acceleration in the rate of growth of productivity. Gardner Ackley recently commented that in the last few years ". . . labor productivity increased solidly at a rate above the postwar average." The data suggest he is right. In the language of calculus, one must look for the second derivative as we move up the curve, at changes in the rate of change. Even if one relies solely on productivity data, a questionable business at best, the analysis should provide more refined calculations than Bell or Solow have hitherto offered.

Casting about for further ammunition in his arsenal, Bell then calls attention to Herbert A. Simon's recent book, *The Shape of Automation* (1965), in which the latter resorts to some simplistic formulations drawn from international trade theory purportedly proving that

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technological innovation is severely limited in its power to spread. In describing Simon's position Bell says: "Technically, the decision to use any new technology depends on its comparative price—of labor and capital. The market price, which determines relative use, will be proportional to the marginal productivity of each factor. In other words the structure of employment will shift in proportion to the man-machine productivity ratios."

It is of course interesting to note this flirtation with archaic classical economic doctrine, but in any case the statement is a mish-mash. First, it is derived from the theory of a perfectly competitive market in static equilibrium under conditions of full employment, and has little relevance for our own monopolistic economy. In such a market entrepreneurs cannot affect price but merely respond to it, so that cost as well as relative price is also an element in "relative use." Secondly, the model is timeless, allowing for no adjustment; technological change, if it has anything, has a time dimension and this too is a factor in "relative use." What Bell and Simon refer to, of course, is the principle of comparative advantage which was employed by Ricardo, Mill and other classicists to explain the flow of trade among nations. However, the "law" assumed, in addition to equilibrium and full employment conditions, fixed proportions between capital and labor: as a basis for analyzing the spread of technology within one country this has little relevance. A further assumption was constancy in cost; in other words, no advantages could accrue from mass production. Indeed, if resource use and other factor endowments were as fixed as the theory says, one would be hard put to explain the diffusion of technology at all. Recognition of these difficulties in classical trade theory generated a rather furious debate over the years, one that has pretty well undermined the text book version on which Bell relies.

Indeed, the relevant theory for an analysis of the economic feasibility of automation would be one based on a straightforward benefit-cost study. As the mathematicians are wont to say, this approach is much more elegant and direct. The underlying assumption is that any technological innovation must yield a present gain or benefit in excess of its cost. Since there are elements of futurity in investment (returns will flow to the firm over a number of years), a compound interest component will enter into the businessman's deliberations. Therefore the present value of a computer or other automation device needs to be related to expected future returns and the rate of interest at compound rates. All this sounds quite technical, but it underscores the palpable fact that a decision to employ a piece of equipment depends

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on the length of life of the machine, its initial and maintenance cost, the rate of interest, and the net returns for the duration of its use. Considering the fact that the computer is a general-purpose machine, the rationality of these calculations can be applied to a simultaneous replacement of bookkeepers and clerks.

In short, it is important to have some grasp of what the modern computer can do and will do. Its capacity now is so large and its speed so quick that even though it may be *less* efficient in handling a clerk's work than a bookkeeper's, it will still do the work of both because it is faster than both. The law of comparative advantage, as interpreted by Bell-Simon, would suggest that the computer would do only the bookkeeper's work. But the limitation of factor endowment which seems so reasonable a restraint in a simple model of international trade does not hold for the new technology. In the long run, as Norbert Wiener once said, the only competition for the machine is a virtually costless human slave. Further, one ought to add some non-economic elements to the Bell-Simon law of comparative advantage. As a sociologist, one might have expected Bell to pay attention to another law—"Keeping Up With Jones." All too many companies have installed the new equipment because an IBM salesman told them a rival had just put in a computer.

## IV

We are not done with this group of thinkers. Simon also wishes to prove that whatever the character of the technical change, labor as a whole is bound to benefit to the detriment of capital. At this point the reader will forgive some mathematical notation: it is essential in dealing with Simon's case, since his argument is based on a pair of specious formulas. I say this because the "model" derived from the formulas is insufficiently general in character to allow for the "irrefutable" predictions that Simon makes.

Here is the model: to examine changes in the composition of the national product stemming from technology, Simon begins with an equation in which the total product is distributed between capital and labor. That is, wages and the cost of capital equals output, which Simon sets at unity in order to study shifts in the proportions. Since each of the terms comprises an input coefficient and a rate, we may state the equation as:

$$WL + RC = 1$$

This says that the wage rate x labor input plus the rate of interest x capital input equals the total product. So far, so good, although we

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must caution that this is only a statement describing the *distribution* of the product: it says nothing about the *level* of output. Now, argues Simon, (by this time Bell has become silent,) because the rate of interest is constant, any gains stemming from technological advance can only benefit labor: if the technical change is capital saving, the proportions shift in labor's favor. If the change is labor saving, then the wage rate will rise.

Of course, the rate of interest is hardly stable, as witness recent Federal Reserve Board action. Yet what of the wage rate? Simon "proves" that wages will rise but he commits a serious error by confusing wage earnings and wage rates. Through a simple algebraic transformation the first equation is transposed into

$$W = \frac{1 - RC}{L}$$

This demonstrates that whatever the nature of the technical change, W, the wage rate, will increase. If automation reduces the labor coefficient, that is, the quantity of labor input, then by inspection W must rise. Good—but what happens to the income of those now separated from the economic process? *The rate may rise, but that doesn't mean that earnings of the entire group will rise also.* If the worker is unattached he has no income. While the reduction of L means a larger value of the fraction on the right side of the equation, L is also smaller by virtue of the technical change.

Had Simon formulated his model to allow for output levels, other interesting possibilities might have emerged. Suppose the original formula is recast as

$$WL + RC = Y$$

where the latter represents the level of output. Now, it can be shown from the formula on page 251 that output is a function of the labor coefficient, productivity and hours worked, i.e., $Y = L(PH)$. Substituting the latter into Simon's formulas, we wind up with

$$W = \frac{L(PH) - RC}{L}$$

Thus, a technical change of the labor saving variety alters both numerator and denominator: output may be reduced as well as labor (of course, productivity takes care of that contingency) so that the wage rate may not be so happily enhanced as Simon anticipates. Generally, it would require a more than proportionate increase in productivity to counter-

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balance the depressive effect of labor cutbacks on the wage rate itself. Of course, this too has happened: but technical shifts of considerable magnitude can cut into wage *income*.

## V

Another argument against the impact of automation is that it reduces prices. Surely this must be an advantage of the new technology: at least, television sets cost less than they did five or six years ago, as do washing machines, vacuum cleaners, radios and refrigerators. It has been said that price reductions are necessary if automated factories are to operate full time, as they must, to be economically practicable. Yet the implication that automation restores flexibility to prices is unwarranted, for those industries in which automated methods are becoming predominant have shown little price movement in recent years—steel and chemicals are cases in point. Furthermore, the flexibility of consumer durable prices responds to pressures other than the method of making the product—discount merchandising and fluctuations in the prices of raw materials.

The indexes of wholesale prices for such items as industrial chemicals, iron and steel, metal working machinery and automobiles have exhibited a remarkable stability since 1957, suggesting that the cost savings stemming from automation have been absorbed by higher profits. In 1958 the profits per sale dollar of American manufacturers was 4.1 per cent: in 1961, the ratio was 4.3 per cent; and in 1962, it was 4.5 per cent. Some prices for "automated" goods have gone up—gasoline and fuels increased about 25 per cent between 1957 and 1964 (at wholesale) and certain types of machinery went up 16 per cent during the same period. Patently, automation has done little to alter the oligopolistic behavior of the major industries in America.

Finally the establishment tells us that automation is no problem because it is just more of the same; it represents progress and should be welcomed; it helps us meet the challenge of foreign competition; natural economic forces will carry through the necessary adjustments less painfully than we expect; new industries will provide ample jobs for those displaced or just entering the labor force; we should rejoice in the opportunity for the leisure that automation affords; the market is infinitely expandable and that alone will create the additional demand; the income pie will become larger, so that everyone will enjoy a larger slice; automation will develop slowly because it requires long-range planning, massive investment, and the skilled personnel that we do not yet have; a developing labor shortage means that we must have

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more and more automation; overall employment has been increasing; such unemployment as we now have must have been caused by factors prior to the advent of the new methods; management's conscience will not allow hardships to develop; such difficulties as do arise are a small price for progress; and automation is the only way to beat the Russians.

Most of these propositions founder on the hard bedrock of empirical fact. But there are other arguments, perhaps best typified by the statements of Yale Brozen, an economics professor at the University of Chicago. Brozen concedes that automation causes displacement, but that ". . . it does not create unemployment in the sense that a larger number are unemployed than would have been if no automation had occurred."[7] This assertion suggests that automation is a way of solving unemployment: it might be described as the job-creating argument with a reverse twist. However, in 31 cases of automation studied by R. A. Beaumont and R. B. Helfgott,[8] employment declined in 20, remained the same in 4, and increased somewhat in 7. The average drop in the two-thirds of the instances where employment declined ranged from 20 to 25 per cent. In one situation, direct production workers dropped from 78 per cent of the work force to 52 per cent, while maintenance and technical employees increased from 22 to 48 per cent. Nevertheless, the *total number* of employees declined almost 30 per cent! One searches in vain for evidence of universal job increases stemming from automation per se: surely if this were the case, there would be no hesitation in presenting the data to the public. (IBM was supposed to have made a study showing substantial employment increases due to automation, but the report presumably is a confidential one, although one is hard put to understand why.)

Brozen goes even further: the blessings of automation have been inhibited by the increase in real wages. He points to a study of conditions in Michigan in which it had been argued that a one per cent increase in relative wages led to a two per cent decline in employment. These results, of course, were said to stem from the inordinate power of the unions, inevitably resulting in a substitution of capital for labor. Unfortunately, the "elasticity of substitution" in the study cited by Brozen was defined as the ratio of labor input to value added. Since this is the reciprocal of just one possible measure of productivity—value added divided by labor input—the relationship was bound to be negative. However, the ratio of labor to value added, conceivably might have been used as an index of labor requirements and if it falls, it merely demonstrates the point that Brozen wishes to deny—technical change does reduce the number of workers. But the problem was more

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complicated than any statistical measure could reveal, for as Daniel Fusfeld has demonstrated, the economic situation in Michigan was conditioned by other factors—the decentralization of auto assembly, a sharp drop in defense contracts, and the self-reinforcing nature of the automation process itself.

## VI

One can deal with such farragos only by a review of the facts. While output per man-hour in the private sector of the economy rose by almost 25 per cent between 1956 and 1963, real income, in terms of hourly compensation for employees, increased by about 18 per cent. Moreover, the gap between the two series has grown over the years. Furthermore, business outlays for new plant and equipment went up 22 per cent from 1956 to 1963 and by 1964 promised to be 35 per cent higher than in the base year. Real wages for factory workers increased by about 3 per cent per annum between 1947 and 1956; in more recent years the average annual increase was 1.6 per cent. It is rather difficult to see, therefore, how wages have been drawing off the benefits of greater productivity, especially when payroll costs per unit of output were 7 per cent less in 1963 than in 1958.

A proper analysis would acknowledge that increases in real wages, given our rules of the economic game, are occasioned by the competition of growing industries for resources. Such an effect was observed almost three-quarters of a century ago by Knut Wicksell, the famous Swedish economist, who had remarked that expansion must take into account increased real wages.[9] For so long as earnings are sustained by growth or shifts to new techniques there should be no objection by entrepreneurs to improved standards. In fact, most discussions of this question—the relation of real wages to capital accumulation—assume perfect competition and what is known as a homogeneous production function (no joint products, no complex processes); under conditions of monopolistic or imperfect competition, the relationship poses even less of a problem. Provision necessarily must be made for a larger amount of "subsistence" goods, i.e., for real wages, unless the entire added accumulation is to be applied exclusively to capital purposes. Indeed, this cannot be the situation in an economy in which decisions on savings and investment are made by different persons. Investment without any absorption at all by wages of at least a portion of the capital accumulation can occur only when the saver and investor are identical—as in a command economy with strict central planning.

The historic process has been such that real wages must rise as

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the economy shifts to new techniques. Otherwise, genuine viability is impossible. In a severely restricted model, real wage increases might limit depreciation reserves so that replacement costs would be inadequate, but only in a model. In real life, such a contingency is of no consequence. U.S. Department of Commerce reports reveal that corporate profits, after taxes, in the first quarter of 1964 were over $30 billion at annual rates—42 per cent higher than in 1961. Between 1953 and 1963 after-tax profits plus depreciation reserves—corporate cash flow—rose from $32.2 billion to $59.5 billion, a jump of 90 per cent. Evidently, the modest rise in real wages in recent years has not exerted any inhibitory effects on capital accumulation. Moreover, the excess cash-flow from 1959 to 1963 exceeded actual investments in new plant and equipment by $8.7 billion.

Furthermore, one must take into account the level of effective demand—a lesson driven home by John Maynard Keynes 30 years ago. In the context of sticky prices and wages (at low levels of equilibrium) it is possible, as Joan Robinson has said, that ". . . each entrepreneur individually gains from low real wages in terms of his own product, but all suffer from the limited market for commodities which a low real wage rate entails."[10] If prices and wages are flexible, a condition that ordinary theory deems to be desirable, and if population increases more rapidly than investment, then all that will have been achieved is a pool of unemployed, while the real wage may at best remain unchanged. Maintaining the same rate of investment will not create more employment. If prices were sticky and wages flexible, the situation would be even worse, since both demand and investment would stagnate. Of course, if investment were to grow and the real wage along with it, then the economy might achieve a state of Nirvana; but in any case, the possibility of a bleaker prospect cannot be denied.

The crux of the situation, consequently, is that real wages must move in consonance with productivity to provide enough demand to absorb the larger output stemming from the investment of capital. Moreover, if population keeps growing, expansion of production must be even greater simply to absorb the new bodies entering the labor force. And to compound the difficulty, additional investment may not contribute much to maintaining the requisite balance because capital-saving is now a significant feature of newly installed equipment. That is, surplus savings unmatched by investment or consumption can develop and upset the delicate balance of the equations. In essence, underconsumption, so long depreciated in standard economic theory, is an ever-present ghost at the banquet table.

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Thus, real wages must keep pace with productivity if a market for goods is to be maintained and capital accumulation is to continue to provide capacity for growth. This is essential if jobs are to be provided under conditions of innovation. The economy may still exhibit manifestations of exhilaration, even if real wages are lagging, but the truth is that trouble would be in the making. It therefore seems evident, both from the standpoint of theory and fact, that automation requires a high level of real wages rather than a low one. With the latter, conditions are bound to develop such that marketability of goods and capital accumulation would both grind to a halt.

## VII

Innovation is a dynamic, active process involving numerous complex non-economic as well as economic considerations. But to the purveyors of orthodox wisdom it is all quite passive and purely economic. For example, Brozen cites the construction of U.S. Steel's Fairless Works as an illustration of pure economic behavior relating costs to output in a manner reminiscent of the curves in an elementary text book. But also meaningful was the desire of the company to move closer to its consumers, an action that involved the abandonment of the basing point system for the F.O.B. mill pricing system. Further, the depletion of old sources of raw materials required U.S. Steel to set up facilities at an Eastern post to make it easier to obtain ore supplies from overseas at minimum cost. And it was to be expected that the latest technology would be employed in a new plant, constructed afresh from the ground up. That is, economic rationality involved more than the cost of the moment.

This emphasizes that the choice of a technique is frequently a matter of responding to a number of conditioning elements which affect the utilization of both capital and labor. If an alteration in capital use impels the selection of an alternative method in production, there is apt to be a shift in labor utilization as well, a point that Brozen does not always specify. Moreover, the production function changes in complicated ways: the decrease in production workers is never fully counterbalanced by increases in maintenance employees, who in any case are apt to be cut back after an automated installation begins to work efficiently. To these effects, one must add a long run tendency to create *in a non-war economy* a stagnant pool of surplus labor. Historically, capital was substituted for labor because of a relative scarcity of the latter. This, at least, was the experience of the 19th century in the U.S. Theoretically, the availability of surplus labor ought to have

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exerted some restraining influences on such substitutions, for when labor competes for jobs, especially in a fluid labor market, the "capitalist" presumably would have less impetus to mechanize. In effect, labor competed against machines.

With an advanced technology, however, such competition can occur only between machines and *usable* labor. Meanwhile, the Wicksell effect, operating through the real wage, tends over the long run to absorb a portion of capital accumulation in that sector of the economy employing the usable work force. In order to maintain a predetermined ratio of profit to capital accumulation it would be necessary for the "capitalist" to mechanize and automate even further, which in turn would make some of the skilled redundant. This all-important ratio, of profit to capital accumulation, may be maintained by resorting to capital-saving investment: in fact, this is often preferable since such a process makes the application of accumulation to investment more extensive, thereby yielding an even greater volume of profit. But what all this suggests is that the "coefficients" implicit in the production function are not invariable. They shift with alterations in the underlying technology and do affect the ratio of capital to labor. This seems to be the crux of the problem: the surplus labor pool which accumulates is less and less usable for the existing techniques and cannot really compete with machines. One cannot simply dip into the pool since the relevant labor force must have certain skills and education. For the more mechanized an industry, the more fixed the specific labor skills required per unit of capital or per unit of output. Moreover, this is apt to be accompanied by a decline in the transferability of skills. In effect, there is a tendency for all labor to be converted into fixed overhead the utilization of which would depend only on capacity. Skills, as once defined, would not be utilized, and in the absence of use, they would deteriorate, creating a continuing barrier between the displaced and the employed. Conceivably, the pool of unskilled would become stagnant, untapped by society because it would have no function—it would become a conglomeration of economically and socially useless persons.

And we must again stress that the process today is sustained by vast accumulations of capital and heavy expenditures for research and development counterbalanced only by an artificial layer of effective demand stemming from the exigencies of defense.

Some optimistic economists offer the bromide that the trend to automate will slow down in the future because outlays for research and development in the 1960's and 1970's will be half the rate of the

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previous decade. There is no doubt of the latter, if the analysis is viewed solely in terms of percentages. However, the meaningful figures would seem to be the absolute dollar amounts: R and D expenditures by the federal government may have been a mere three-fourths of a billion dollars in 1940; in 1962 they were over $9 billion. At $16.4 billion total R and D outlays had more than tripled in 1962-63 as compared to a decade earlier. It is unlikely that these sums will be inadequate to provide the scientific basis for further technological advance.

And to assume, as Brozen does, that it would take $2 trillion to automate American industry is to suggest that it can't be done. Yet it *is* being done; the cost of computers is coming within reach of even small companies; and with interchangeable programming, computer manufacturers are impelled to compete on price. Moreover, since much of the new equipment is capital saving, there should be little fear that trends in capital formation would be inadequate. In manufacturing, the average annual increase in capital from 1945 to 1956 was over 6 per cent. About a fifth of manufacturing concerns experienced annual increases of 3 to 5 per cent; a fifth had gains of 7 to 9 per cent; and almost a fourth showed advances of over 9 per cent. From 1946 to 1955 the average annual net capital formation was about $8 billion a year. The net stock of capital has grown from about $2100 per worker in the 1870's to about $5400 in 1955, faster than the growth in population: there does not appear to be a great dearth of capital accumulation.

Supporting these trends has been the decline in capital-output ratios, indicating a tendency toward larger output per unit of capital. In transportation, communication, and utilities the secular movement was from an average of about 12 (a dollar of output for $12 of capital) in the 1880's, to 6.5 at the turn of the century, to 3.5 in the 1920's, to 1.7 in 1950. Similarly in manufacturing the ratio dropped from 1929 to 1957 by almost a third. Meanwhile the ratio of man-hours worked to output fell 45 per cent. Perhaps these relationships changed as they did because much of the investment has been of the capital-saving variety. A recent illustration is a Carling's brewery utilizing a new continuous process for making beer that was not only more productive but required just three-fourths of the capital investment of a conventional plant. (An accumulation of "for examples" may indeed suggest a trend.)

## VIII

Why the present failure of imagination and perception? Several factors appear to be responsible: the failure to grasp a clear-cut distinction between ordinary industrialization and automation

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(or cybernation) which has led many to assume falsely that it is all of a single piece; the lack of a sufficiently rapid economic growth in the Eisenhower years intensified the effects of the new technology; and an inordinate infatuation with the impersonal mechanisms of standard Keynesianism, so indifferent to specifics, has impelled many to accept the belief that monetary and fiscal policy is quite sufficient to correct all ills. Aside from depreciating the urgency of technological displacement, pure Keynesians insist that demand is the crucial factor: when demand expands as fast as the output we *could* produce, then automation, they say, would indeed result in more jobs.

Let us state once and for all: a high degree of demand is a *sine qua non* for a viable economy and an essential base for solving the persistent problems of the time. Again, it is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. We cannot assume that resources and manpower would be readily available under ordinary circumstances to fulfill the needs of rapid expansion. We cannot assume that obsolescent skills, geographic distortions in the distribution of the labor force, or inadequate data on labor market requirements are of little significance. Obviously, the so-called "structural" treatment implied by such questions would not be successful in a great depression such as that in the 1930's. In that situation, the effective demand cure was required. Again, the cure worked in the decade of the 40's because we went to war. The most recent experience has been the enjoyment of a fast-moving economy, which nevertheless has in normal times left behind large blocs of the populace. As we rush down the highway, the road can get rougher: to shift the image, bottlenecks tend to develop and we discover that the economy, even with its "normal" government programs, cannot employ the untutored, the unskilled, the displaced.

Clearly, the problem is considerably more complicated than the proponents of automatic adjustment suggest. Is there some optimum rate of innovation which would cause neither disruption nor technical stagnation? What are the indirect impacts of automation, i.e., how does automation in one sector of the economy spill over into others? How do geographic shifts stemming from automation affect people, industries, regional economies? Can demand keep pace with output? Can output keep pace with population? Will capital accumulation be employed in ways that will insure a balance between savings and investment, between capacity and demand? Or will we have to break the traditional work nexus of our society by providing incomes as a matter of right equal to the "wages" of the machine which displaces the human being in production?

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These ought to be the elements of the present debate. As Robert Heilbroner has said, they reveal the failure of economic and social theory to deal in meaningful ways with the problem of technology.[11] For technology is central to contemporary existence and traditional economic theory's incapacity or unwillingness to deal with the machine merely reveals its purveyors to be victims of a whole generation of evasive economic thought. What we lack, says Heilbroner, ". . . is a conception of the technological process sufficiently broad to comprehend its long range and its short range impacts, alive to its secular re-arrangements of society as well as its mixed creative and disruptive effects . . ." We ought to have a theory of technology in which monopolistic competition is the framework of corporate behavior; in which innovation is a guided and directed and government-supported process; in which technology so alters the organization of business as to raise critical questions of control; in which mass reaction and mass behavior is a reality; in which affluence seldom spills over into the realm of public services; and in which a proper social response would really make automation the blessing it has yet to become.

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1 Paul Douglas, "Technological Unemployment," *American Federationist*, August, 1930. It is doubtful that Senator Douglas now subscribes to these views.

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3 J. R. Bright, *Research Development and Technological Innovation*, Homewood, Ill., 1964, p. 2.

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Calvin Hernton

# GOING BACK SOUTH*

On important holidays and especially at Christmas, the buses and trains leaving the North and heading South are heavy-laden with what seems like an infinite assortment of black people. They are young and old, good, bad, indifferent. There are children among them; some are very black, others very light, and still others of all the shades and hues in-between. There are women, young, old, pretty, ugly, fat, lean, short, tall, and of all sizes and shapes. There are those who are completely ignorant or semiliterate, as well as school teachers, doctors, social workers, skilled laborers, and technicians.

Every year they go up and down the country like refugees of some dark and embattled republic, like an endless caravan of ambivalent migrants torn between homeland and newland, continually returning to see loved ones and friends and relatives, returning to memories that ache and yet somehow warm the heart.

Last Christmas, I too found myself in Pennsylvania Station, standing in line, waiting to purchase a ticket that would take me back, deep into the recesses of the "Down-Home Country." Standing there in that long line, I realized something I had never thought about before. Everywhere, at all the ticket windows, at the information booth, in the snack bar, on the benches and throughout the entire station there were hordes and hordes of black faces. Three out of four persons were Negro. How strange this must have seemed to the few whites who were scattered among us. I saw them glancing and staring like perplexed puppies—"Where are all these Negroes going?" They must have known where we were going, but *why* must have been the question. The philosophical *why* caused them to stand and gaze at us with curious and puzzled faces. How can white people possibly know or understand, in the face of the much publicized anti-Negro bigotry in the South, the secret longings in the hearts, souls, and minds of Negroes that pull them back down to that terrible place, year after year, season after season?

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The Negroes were dressed up! They had on suits, ties, nice shoes, new dresses, smart-looking coats and, no doubt, clean underwear. They were busy talking. They appeared excited and enthused about their journey homeward. Some of them were, although quite well-behaved, a little tipsy. Their eyes were aglow as if they were putting something over on someone. Their tongues suffused the lofty dome of Penn Station with what I knew to be the conversation content, syntax and speech pattern of down-home Negroes. Their posture, their gestures, their stance, despite attempts at being hippy-dippy, were those of southern Negroes. I looked down at myself. I had not thought of dressing up. I wore corduroy trousers, a workman's flannel shirt, and my favorite leather jacket on the back of which the crooked, illegible lettering of a four-year-old child was barely visible. In my hip pocket was a notebook and in my notebook was a sharpened pencil. I felt alone, out of place, alienated. I was not going back down South to impress anybody. Although I did not abhor the idea, I was not really going back to have a ball. I was going back to try, as best I could, to resolve a conundrum. Rather than jubilant, or vainly proud, I was melancholy and pensive. I had to find out if I was through with the South, if it was through with me, if I was through with my relatives whom I love, my mother, my in-laws, my grandmother sauntering towards a centennial of life and joy and struggle on this earth. Essentially I was a little afraid. As I stood there in the station like that (*naked,* so to speak), an existential insight took possession of my imagination.

All except a very few of the Negroes I had known and seen in the North were exactly like those in whose midst I was now standing. They were, like myself, migrants from the South. But there, the similarity between me and them ended. Thousands and thousands of southern Negroes come to various parts of the North with their woes and their children. They bear more children, and their children bear children. But everything else remains the same, they do not change. Except for a better job and perhaps a more adequate house in which to live, they remain *southern* Negroes even unto the second generation. Most of them might as well still be living in South Carolina or Georgia or wherever they have come from.

I think of Newark, New Jersey, where the round of daily life for the mass of Negroes is impossible to distinguish from that of Negroes in any ghetto south of the Potomac River. Specifically on Sunday, some Negroes in Newark act the same as others do in, say, Huntsville, Alabama. All day long they go to church. Baptist, Methodist, and Holy Roller. The men put on their suits and ties and their shined shoes,

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the women put on solid white or black dresses. They go to Sunday school, stay for the morning service, then return home and eat southern fried chicken, collard greens and corn bread, and at night they attend service again. Throughout the day there is quartet singing, "battles of music," gospels and spirituals. On the Negro radio stations, and some white ones that cater to the Negro market, there is gospel music all day, and the announcers with their thick Negro dialects are difficult to understand if one is not from down South. The teenagers get "sharp," and after church they throng the sidewalks and street corners. They do not do anything, they have nowhere to go. They just mill around, being "sharp" on Sunday, and whistle at girls and passers-by. Those who own or who have the use of automobiles ride through the ghetto, picking up girls and joking with those hanging out on the block. This is Newark, New Jersey, where thousands of Negroes who have migrated from the South are still down South.

## II

The overwhelming majority of southern Negroes who relocate in Newark or Harlem or Chicago or Washington, D.C., never really leave the South. They migrate physically but do not migrate spiritually or culturally. Nothing happens to them intellectually as a consequence of geographically coming North. They still think and speak categorically of white people as "crackers." The hate is still there, and so is the fear. They might work with and move in and among whites and even exchange polite words, but in all of this they maintain a rigid sociopsychological distance. Their souls and minds remain chained to the Down-Home Country. They are not chained to the land because they have no land. They are not chained to any material structures of the South because they have no access to material structures except the bleak façades of the ghetto. Rather, it is the ethos of the southern ghetto and the folkways of the South in general that southern Negroes have internalized and which they seem to be incapable of purging from their psyches. When they reach the northern environment, instead of expanding and shedding the old baggage and reorienting themselves to a new life, they, in many instances, tighten up and look for the familiar, and what they find is nothing less than a replica of the Down-Home habitat, the northern ghetto.

Some of this is due to the fact that in the North Negroes are often forced to live in ghettos and are actually, however subtly, denied the pursuit of a new life. Just as frequently, however, the southern way of life has rendered the Negro incapable of *ever* making a philosophical transformation regardless of where he might go. For most Negroes, the

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South is a psychocultural region of mixed personality determinants whose conflicting vectors completely immobilize the flexibility and continued growth of the psyche. On the one hand, the Negro is the exclusive product of ghetto life in the South—on the other hand, he is a general product of southern folkways. He has both worlds inside him, and he is loyal to both although he has only participated in one. He is, therefore, wedded to the entire South just as certainly as the white southerner. The Negro's hopes and fears, his embarassments and guilts and sore spots, are southern. The fact that many ex-southern and southern Negroes are ashamed of the South or of some of its aspects reveals that they *love* it so much; it is HOME, the only home they will ever really know.

The fact that Negroes are alienated from the broader sociocultural life of the South and its deeper mysteries does not frequently pull them away, but binds them ever more closely to the bosom of Down-Home. The South is the mother-matrix out of which and in which the Negro's mind has been fashioned; it is at the same time the festering ache in the republic of his heart. This, more than anything else, is why they go back.

So, I too took a trip back. Long before I reached the Tennessee town where I was born, I knew that what I saw, with both my mind and my eye, would determine whether or not this visit would be my last.

Entering Chattanooga, I was struck by the degree to which the city had changed. I saw that old factories and plants (for Chattanooga is mainly an industrial center) had been demolished and sharp new ones had taken their places. I saw that many slum areas had been leveled and cleared. Modern structures, housing projects, and office buildings shone bright and as yet unsoiled in the winter sun. There were new bridges and freeways and turnpikes, and more were under construction. Streets within the city had been widened.

In a way it was no surprise, for one is aware that as industrialization and city life become more of a fact in the South, broad technological innovations are the necessary concomitants. Characteristic of the South, however, is the tendency for southerners to separate the technological aspects of their world from its social or human morality, especially with reference to the Negro. I began to wonder to what extent the human aspects of their lives had kept or were keeping pace with the inspiring technological changes I saw everywhere.

In all the major southern cities (excluding those in Mississippi), desegregation is noticeable in the schools, in interstate transportation facilities, in the larger hotels and some eating establishments, and even

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in certain areas of employment. In the city where I was born I saw Negro women working as cashiers in a local supermarket that formerly employed only whites, except in the most menial jobs. I was impressed to find that even in the smaller towns and hamlets far more bus and train stations have dropped all visible signs of enforced segregation than one would expect.

Equally important, if not more so, is the beginning of change in the personal as well as public attitudes of whites toward the Negro. As I walked the streets, I was aware of not being stared at with as much hatred and as frequently as in the past. In department, drug, and food stores, I discerned an attitude on the part of some whites which approached authentic respect for me as a human being. Much of the change in attitude is taking place in, not all, but a great many of the white youth, noticeably in those who might have been or who are in the Armed Forces and those who attend schools outside the South. Their experiences in a desegregated atmosphere seem to be counteracting many of the prejudices and hateful emotions that they had internalized from a southern upbringing.

## III

On the train down from New York, a white youth seated behind me touched my shoulder and extended his hand with obvious warmth, explaining that he was a Columbia University student and that he had been in the audience during a poetry reading in which I had participated. He moved up and sat with me and we talked. He had a thick southern accent, but not once did I discern the overt or hidden disrespect for the Negro that usually accompanies such an accent.

In a rural South Carolina town I witnessed an incident where a group of white youths, who were waiting outside a supermarket, came over to a Negro youth, who also seemed to be waiting for someone, and began a friendly conversation. The mother of the Negro youth explained that more and more of this is taking place, and that such a thing would not have happened a year ago. She further stated that whites in general were referring to Negroes as "Mr." and "Mrs." more frequently than they used to, and that, "Us Negroes are getting where we can talk back or speak up to whites like men and women without the crackers wanting to bash in our heads or asking us, 'What did you say, Nigger?' and we'd have to drop our heads and mumble, 'Nothing,' to Miss Ann or to Mr. Charlie. Us black folks are getting where we don't have to do that any more."

While one must recognize these and other changes in the South which indicate that the trend will continue on a more broad and in-

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tensive basis, I must also emphasize that the actual social status of the Negro in general is in fact the same as it was ten years ago. By and large Negroes are still without the ballot, still denied equal job opportunities, still the victims of Jim Crow and bigotry. Isolated incidents of token integration, human respect and kindness from whites are not yet the rule but the exception. The young whites who are sympathetic toward the Negro struggle constitute only a small fraction of the total white population, and they are neither statistically nor qualitatively in a position to uproot the intricate system of race hatred and human oppression that has been and is still one of the *foundations* of the "southern way of life."

The greatest change in the South is not a significant innovation in the sociopolitical status of the Negro. Nor is it any appreciable mitigation of southern hatred and inhumanity in the hearts of whites or in their actual behavior toward black people. Rather, it is the philosophical transformation, the *morale,* of a large portion of southern Negroes toward allieviating their oppression. Formerly the Negro was handicapped by his own attitude regarding his status in the South. Largely, he believed that he was helpless, that protests and demonstrations and fighting back were useless, that "we Negroes just can't stick together." This is changing! The Negro now has a new morality. He actually believes that he himself can wage a gradually successful fight and, indeed, overcome. Make no mistake, the great percentage of southern Negroes, especially the youth, know damn well that if some changes are taking place, it is almost solely because of *their* valiant struggle, of *their* bloodshedding and deaths, and not because of any goodwill or change of heart on the part of "white folks." The northern liberals and other whites who want to help would do well to take cognizance of this when they, whether intentionally or unconsciously, speak about the "role of liberal whites" in bringing about changes in the South, and when white southerners offer the hand of "friendship" to black youths.

Over and over again, I discerned, smoldering beneath the breath of the young blacks, a terrible hatred for southern, and some northern, whites who now—since the "revolution" seems to be unarrestable—offer their friendship, as if this would wipe out all the years of the Negro's toil and suffering. It goes against my emotions, but it seems to me that the cessation of centuries of being hated cannot wipe out overnight the welled-up desire to hate back. The young blacks do not want to shake hands and forget. They want revenge. The Negro youths know that they have been immeasurably crippled by centuries of racism in

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America, and, when freedom comes and even after, they are aware that the effects of racism will still be a hideous ghost taunting their minds, their souls, and their egos. God, along with Dr. Martin Luther King, might absolve the white folks. But, I am afraid, before significant numbers of contemporary black southern youth (not to mention those in the North) can ever love, they will first have to hate.

If the technological changes in the South were as slow and incomplete as those needed in the area of human relations, there would be but half of a turnpike, a fourth of a bridge, a third of a new plant, and so on. The only significant social innovation that the South has finally instituted on a broad scale is desegration. But there is very little *integration*. I observed, for instance, that, with the exception of the state of Mississippi and a few more isolated places, the physical barriers in interstate and some local traveling facilities are completely down—there are no signs, no partitions, no separate baths or ticket windows. Yet, almost everywhere, blacks and whites huddle together in separate bundles. It was uncanny when I walked into the Greyhound station in Spartanburg, South Carolina, and saw no racial barriers whatever, to find blacks and whites sitting as far from one another as possible, like scared chickens. At that moment I was engulfed by a terrible sadness. It was as if the physical barriers were still there and, indeed, they were. The barriers were the people themselves. They had leaped out of the psyches of whites and blacks alike, and stood there in the station as firmly as if they had never been torn down but reinforced. *Segregation is at least as much a psychosomatic phenomenon as it is objectively physical.* To remove the concrete barriers is but half the job. It is similar to removing the bandages and leaving the sores to fester in pain.

More than one Negro told me that it was perhaps not a good thing for one or two Negro children to attend integrated—no, *desegrated*—schools because, ". . . the Negro children are going to have to spend a year or more getting used to all those white children, and they won't have time to concentrate on their learning and will waste time." At one point I grew angry and made a sarcastic retort: "What do you think is going to happen to the poor white children, trying to get *used* to those black ones . . .?"

For most southern Negroes and whites, associating with the opposite color constitutes an *exotic* experience fraught with *nameless* fears. Now that the physical barriers are coming down, Negroes and whites alike find it difficult to define their fears. It is not so much the fear of violence—both groups are accustomed to violence. It is not so much

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the fear of intermarriage. It is a fear in the mind, a fear of the psyche-self, a fear, if you please, of *pain* that will havoc the entire personality structure as a consequence of becoming *involved* with people of another color. Existential pain.

No matter how many objective barriers, political or economic, are brought down by the present strife, there will be no peace in the South until the corresponding subjective barriers in the personalities of blacks and whites are assailed, uprooted and flung to the ground. This pain must be undergone and mastered.

The old bigots and the new young racists are incapable of mastering such pain. The South will change but the bigots and racists will never change. They will have to die off or be killed. It is not a matter of "cultural lag." Rather than explaining or providing a frame of reference for meaningful understanding and analysis of the South, the cultural lag formula serves to obfuscate the issues and mechanically to excuse the South for its reactionary institutions. Put aside the sociological theories, all of them, and examine the South as a *thing.*

The explicit and essential function of the *southern way of life* has been and is, with reference to human relations, the maintenance and promotion of systematic oppression of the Negro. When, over the years, the interlocking structures of Negro oppression became institutionalized into an ongoing system, that system was a *fait accompli,* never to change or evolve out of itself, but only to grow stronger within itself. For southern society, it was and still is a *positive* system. The *existence* of the racist or bigot is bound, is indeed *condemned,* to this system. The southern way of life, here meaning Negro oppression, is the single, most important factor upon which the majority of southerners base their self-esteem. Wipe out the system of Negro oppression in the South and you automatically destroy the racist's sense of well-being.

In a very literal sense the racist, in ideology and in fact, *needs* "the nigger." Hatred for Negroes in the South is not a theoretical or an impersonal thing; it is a deep *intimate* emotion which constitutes a vital part of the everyday life of "white folks." Contrary to much contemporary sociological theory, the Negro is not an abstraction, not merely a generalization. Those who hate the Negro, hate him *carnally.* They hate him biologically: his smell, his color, his genitals, his features. Almost invariably the killing or mistreatment of a Negro by southern whites is not done in an objective, impersonal manner. The Negro's body is attacked and maimed. His flesh is beaten and violated in a most intimate and pornographic fashion, as if by a lover who has gone mad.

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It is a well-established principle in modern psychology that when hatred becomes so personal, so carnal and intimate, the rage and fury of the hater is not only generated by revulsion for the hated but also by an alien desire to "love" the hated. By *alien,* I mean a desire that is socially and morally forbidden but which the person cannot rid himself of. He therefore must suppress it, thereby intensifying his agony to the point where it explodes in the most violent hatred for the forbidden object.

The Negro is torn between self-love and self-hate. This ambivalence is strictly a manifestation in the Negro of the internalization of the "hate-love syndrome" with which whites are afflicted regarding their emotions toward black people. Why, for instance, during the current flurry of civil rights demonstrations in the South, are whites so eager to provoke physical violence? Specifically, in Selma, Alabama, as elsewhere, the desire for intimate contact with Negroes is perversely fulfilled in and through acts of tussling with and beating colored people. After all, any sensible person knows that the mere fact of Negroes marching is not going to achieve very much. In my opinion, the most objective response would be to let them march, ignore them. There are sufficient indications to assert that white southerners are, if not "in love" with Negroes, definitely emotionally involved with or "hung up" on the black people who are bodily and psychologically in their midst.

## IV

Whites down South do not leave Negroes alone even when the Negroes, so to speak, remain in their place. *The fact is, southern whites and Negroes are more alike in every way, save skin color, than most of us are accustomed to believing.* On the train going from New York, once we were out of Washington, D.C., I noticed a sight familiar to passenger trains in the South. Up and down the train a Negro "conductor" followed close behind his white counterpart in goose-step fashion. Upon reflection and deep scrutiny, it was amazing how similar these two men were—their stances, their faces, the skin of their chins, toughened from years of shaving, their mannerisms, their hands. The two men must have been working together for decades. Of course, on one level, they represented the traditional symbols of "Mr. Charlie" and "Uncle Tom." On the human level, as sociocultural products, they were twin brothers. There are strong, intimate and terrible forces, factors and conditions in the South which bind whites and blacks together as one people just as the racist system so painfully keeps them separated. Historically the South has been described as a rural, tradition-

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directed society with a culture rooted in the past and determined more by folkways and blind customs than by law or technical innovations. Despite the continuing disappearance of agrarian life and the rise of cities, along with other industrial or technological changes, the southern people, black and white, are to this day still a rural-minded, anti-cosmopolitan, morally primitive type of people. Both groups enjoy a slow pace of life, both are possessed by a regional psychology which tends to make them indigenous-minded, semi-ignorant about the world, suspicious of "outsiders" and whatever is new. Psychoculturally, most southerners are creatures of the folkways where ingroupism, blind loyalty, and fear supercede openmindedness and preclude change. Except for the current change in the morale of southern Negroes regarding their oppression, the fundamental life or world outlook of blacks in the South is strikingly similar to that of southern whites. The stereotypes of "crackers" and "niggers" are much more than stereotypes. They are terms which describe and involve an interchangeable reality—the "southern way of life"—which constitutes, however separate, a *shared history* that is embedded in and has shaped the personalities of whites and blacks alike. Observe, for instance, how three historical experiences—religious fundamentalism, racism, and economic exploitation by the North—have wrought in the personalities of both blacks and whites a distorted, if not guilt-ridden sexuality, a hate-and-love syndrome toward each other, and a pathological attitude regarding northerners. To speak realistically of "the southern mind" is to speak not only of the white, but of the black as well.

Contrary to what we are used to hearing, contrary to most sociological and psychological thought on the South, it is the *similarities* of blacks and whites, rather than the differences, that serve as fear-triggering mechanisms and prevent them from coming together under one moral and human order. Rather than the physical twoness of Negro and white in the South, it is their historical oneness that serves as the secret volcano of fear behind the visible and invisible barriers erected between them. The fact that many southern Negroes and whites go to great lengths in asserting their "differences" is an indication of the contrary. Racism and Jim Crow are, in this context, simply attempts to obliterate that part of the South, its true history, without which there would be no terror in our hearts when we speak of having a cup of coffee in a desegregated restaurant. The underlying magnets between whites and blacks in the South are the dynamics of fear that alienate them. Make no mistake, they will be alienated for a long time yet. They will be alienated not because they hate each other so much but because they love one another with such unspeakable guilt.

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Richard A. Falk

# U.S. IN VIETNAM: RATIONALE & LAW

A peaceful settlement of the Vietnam war requires some initial conception of a reasonable bargaining position for both sides. In my judgment, the United States has not sufficiently shown that it understands or is prepared to negotiate on such a basis.

Our continuing refusal to recognize the Vietcong as a formal participant in a peace settlement underscores our unreasonableness. It implies that the Saigon regime is the only legitimate political elite in South Vietnam, whereas the claims of the NLF to both autonomy and legitimacy are at least as good as, and probably considerably better than, those of Saigon. To say that Hanoi alone represents "the other side" is to insist upon the fiction that there is no genuine civil war in South Vietnam and that the war has from beginning to end been a consequence of aggression by North Vietnam. Such a premise for negotiations is obviously unacceptable to the NLF, but even Hanoi—however much it might like to control the future of South Vietnam—is naturally reluctant to concede this American interpretation of the war. Neither the actual political relationships nor the stated objectives of Hanoi bear out the American contention. As a preliminary adaptation to political reality, then, it is important for the United States to acknowledge the war for what it *primarily* is—a civil war in which both sides have received extensive military support and political guidance from outside states.

This interpretation leads to the conclusion that in any settlement Saigon and the NLF must participate and negotiate on the basis of *formal* equality. And if the negotiations are to succeed, once formal equality is established, it will also be necessary to recognize the *factual* inequality of the two sides. That is, it will be necessary to recognize that the NLF commands more military power and political stability than Saigon.

Our policy in Vietnam is an outcome of the crusade against Communism and typifies the pitfalls of accepting an over-generalized commitment to fight whenever and wherever there may otherwise result an extention of Communist influence. This anti-Communist crusade has led to the use of military power by the United States throughout the world.

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It has also led the United States to repudiate increasingly the procedures of the UN that it did so much to create.

The commitment to defend societies against Communist aggression had as its premises, first, the existence of a monolithic Stalinism active in world affairs, and second, the vulnerability of Western Europe to subversion after World War II. In 1947 the Truman Doctrine was formulated specifically to help the government of Greece defeat a Communist-led insurgency and to bolster the internal security of Turkey. The U.S. commitment took explicit account of the inability of Great Britain to continue giving support to Greece. President Truman's central rationale appeared in a speech to Congress: "Greece must have assistance if it is to become a self-supporting and self-respecting democracy. The United States must supply that assistance. We have already extended to Greece certain types of relief and economic aid, but these are inadequate. There is no other country to which democratic Greece can turn. No other nation is willing and able to provide the necessary support for a democratic Greek Government." The civil war was won by the Greek government, the situation in Turkey was stabilized, and elsewhere in Western Europe the advance of Communism was halted, in part as a result of large-scale American aid made possible by the Marshall plan.

Our special responsibility in the struggle against Communism was reasserted in Korea, with our military power committed nominally as a peace-keeping operation under the auspices of the United Nations, but largely financed and handled under the independent authority of the United States. The American use of military power, however, rested upon the wider justification that North Korea was engaged in a war of conquest initiated by a massive armed attack across an internationally recognized frontier. Such recourse to aggression violated in blatant form the fundamental obligation of the United Nations Charter, and the action of the United States in defense of South Korea gave powerful evidence of a national commitment to back up this obligation. The reality of this commitment was further established by U.S. opposition to the use of military force by Israel, France, and the United Kingdom in the Suez campaign of 1956. In retrospect the American stand is especially impressive because the attack on Egypt was partly in response to Egyptian "indirect aggression" in the form of *fedayeen* raids upon Israel from protected sanctuaries. Yet the United States took a strong stand in the UN against our closest allies, suggesting the precedence of collective security over the vagaries of alliance politics. Such a stand also tended to vindicate the American claims that it was not using the United Nations solely as a weapon in the cold war.

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II

Then came a major change. The Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957 crucially expanded American responsibility for the containment of Communism. A joint resolution of Congress, at the request of Eisenhower, authorized the President "to use armed force to assist" nations in the Middle East resisting "armed aggression from any country controlled by international communism." In the summer of 1958 the Eisenhower Doctrine was invoked when several detachments of U.S. marines were sent to Lebanon to help the shaky Chamoun regime survive internal crises allegedly provoked by external "intervention."

The Eisenhower Doctrine is very important because (1) it envisions the active use of military force by the United States in foreign countries, as distinct from the military aid given European countries; (2) it extends the U.S. commitment beyond Europe to embrace the far less stable nation-states of the Middle East; (3) it was formulated in ideological rather than world-order terms; and (4) it anticipates U.S. military involvement in conflicts that are in part, at least, civil wars. This new role for U.S. military power was advanced without any serious consideration as to how it might affect our obligations to the United Nations, especially the commitment to renounce the use of force in international affairs except in case of self-defense against an armed attack from an external source. Furthermore, no criteria were offered to distinguish aggression from revolution or civil strife. The Eisenhower Doctrine implied a broad discretion by the United States government, a discretion that has come increasingly to mean U.S. military intervention *anywhere*, if necessary to defend a government from a Communist takeover. Thus, the recent use of American military power in the Dominican Republic is an extreme instance of the claims originated in the Eisenhower Doctrine. The struggle in the Dominican Republic in 1965 was as purely internal as any political struggle can be in the contemporary world, and U.S. intervention in it assumes an imperial prerogative to control the outcome of civil wars in which victory might otherwise be won by a regime with leftist sympathies or personnel. We label the war in whatever manner justifies our action and then refuse to allow international institutions to pass judgment upon what we do.

The Communist powers have their own symmetrical doctrine to justify interventions in civil wars, based upon rendering support for "wars of national liberation." But even the most militant Communist conception of support, the Chinese, falls far short of *overt* military intervention—except perhaps to offset overt military intervention on the other side. In 1965 Mao Tse-tung accurately pointed out in an interview with

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Edgar Snow that "China gave support to revolutionary movements but not by sending troops." Mao went on to say, "Of course, whenever a liberation struggle existed China would publish statements and call demonstrations to support it." Mao might have also added a willingness to send relatively low-level financial and military aid.

What is important here is the extreme militancy of U.S. doctrine and practice with respect to using military power—even in comparison to China, the state alleged to be most destructive of minimum conceptions of world order. Both in word and deed, it is the United States that is using armies in flagrant disregard of the fundamental rules of world order and adopting the role of an imperial power accountable only to itself.

Even Vietnam has not led to a softening of this general commitment to a global crusade against Communism. Dean Rusk's opening statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February 1966 reiterated claims of unilateral prerogatives. Mr. Rusk relied heavily upon a strained construction of Article IV of the SEATO treaty—namely, "each party recognized that aggression by means of armed attack would endanger its own peace and safety, and agrees that it will in that event act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes." Rusk went on to say that "it is this fundamental SEATO obligation that has from the outset guided our actions in South Vietnam." Such a conclusion seems to overlook the discrepancy between the unilateral quality of the United States' presence in Vietnam and the collective and consultative nature of the SEATO arrangement.

And what is more, Mr. Rusk insisted that unilateral military action was authorized by the SEATO treaty without any obligation for accountability at either the regional or global level: "If the United States determines that an armed attack has occurred against any nation to whom the protection of the treaty applies, then it is obligated 'to act to meet the common danger' without regard to the views or actions of any other treaty member." The regional framework, then, operates as a legitimizing umbrella for decisions by single nations to use military power.

When applied to Vietnam, the notion that this SEATO framework imposes "an obligation" upon the United States is especially far-fetched. It would imply, for instance, that France is violating the treaty because it has refused to support our intervention. Also, given the Rusk view that each member of SEATO determines its own military response, it is possible to imagine two members of SEATO coming to opposite conclusions about who is the wrongful faction in a civil war and then engage in a war against one another, each acting to carry out its so-called

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fundamental SEATO obligation. All of which suggests how absurd it is to find justification in the SEATO treaty for an essentially unilateral operation. It is radical enough for the United States to consider itself a regional power in every part of the non-Communist world except Africa; but it is dramatically more so to consider that it has a unilateral prerogative, even an obligation, to use its military power to uphold regional security independent of the wishes of the countries that actually comprise the region, and to do all this under the banner of regionalism. The artificiality of this posture reinforces the widespread impression that the United States is using its great power to intervene brutally—and futilely—in a war that was and should have remained essentially Asian in character, that is, truly subject to regional control.

Vice President Humphrey's tour of Southeast Asia at the start of 1966 adds further to this picture of the United States acting on its own to guarantee governments of the area unlimited support in the event they are confronted with an internal or external enemy that we and they identify with Communism. The policy seems designed to pledge us to go on fighting wars of the Vietnam variety wherever and whenever they break out. One would have hoped that the minimum lesson of the war would be to convince the Administration that new procedures for collective responsibility and action must be devised to avoid a repetition of the Vietnamese nightmare.

Underlying this expectation that alternative means of promoting security might be developed is the strong belief that there exists a general interest among all countries in preventing aggression against themselves. The United States has neither a special insight into nor a special vulnerability to such aggression. Quite the contrary. The security of the United States in traditional terms of national independence is greater than that of any country in the world. Why are not other countries joining us more vigorously in our Vietnamese effort? Why is the United States alone willing to sacrifice the lives of its men and pay the enormous costs of waging this unsuccessful and protracted war? Part of the true explanation is the degree to which our perceptions have been shaped by a self-created myth of American responsibility. Over and over again President Johnson and his chief lieutenants have emphasized that we are in Vietnam "because we have a promise to keep." When examined, this promise turns out to be nothing more substantial than the SEATO obligation stressed by Secretary Rusk. The political underpinning of our continued commitment is the belief voiced by President Johnson in his Johns Hopkins speech of April 1965 that "Around the globe from Berlin to Thailand are people whose well-being rests in part

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on the belief that they can count on us if they are attacked." Thus, "to leave Vietnam to its fate would shake the confidence of all these people in the value of an American commitment and in the value of America's word." The result is a self-professed test of will, the outcome of which is made relevant to the whole future of collective self-defense. One wonders, also, whether a face-saving settlement in Vietnam attained after many years of protracted violence will reassure countries about the benefit of U.S. support to an extent greater than would non-participation from the outset.

## III

U.S. spokesmen contend that we are fighting in Vietnam to uphold the principles of collective self-defense. This explanation presupposes an armed attack from North Vietnam and a legitimately vested political authority in South Vietnam competent to claim self-defense. Neither of these presuppositions seem to exist and, therefore, what is being tested by our military presence is not a commitment to collective self-defense.

There is no evidence that countries dependent upon our support would object to a settlement of the war in Vietnam even if it meant a partial or total Vietcong victory. And if these countries did object, what could they do, in any event, except seek alternate means to uphold their security? Suppose the worst fears of Washington are realized and the American commitment is not taken as seriously as before—is this necessarily detrimental to national or global interests? Why? It is precisely my argument that the United States commitment is excessive—because it is both too unilateral and too extensive. Suppose our friends from Berlin to Thailand grow more self-reliant or search for alternative allies. Certainly these states are not likely to forgo their independence by seeking from Moscow or Peking what they no longer can obtain fully from Washington. For presumably it is the danger posed by the Soviet Union and China that has led them to seek (or accept) our support.

Not only is there no prospect that dishonoring the pledge, even if we take the leap of imagination needed to believe that it exists, would radiate detrimental consequences. The war in South Vietnam is not even a good test if the pledge is identified with obligations of collective self-defense. The notion of collective self-defense had been generally assumed to apply to the Korea-type war waged by one political entity against another. It was not previously thought to cover interventions in civil wars. In fact, if South Vietnam witnesses the expansion of the concept of collective self-defense to cover responses to interventions on the side of insurgents in a civil war, then the United States is promising a great deal indeed to countries around the globe. No one argued during the

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Spanish Civil War that the massive interventions by the Germans and the Italians on the side of Franco would have entitled the Soviet Union, as an ally of the incumbent, to bomb Germany and Italy in "self-defense" of Spain. The general conception had been that third powers owed a duty of neutrality to both sides in a civil war, but that if intervention did take place on one side it legitimized proportional counter-intervention, but did not create the basis for "action in self-defense."

This distinction between collective self-defense and counter-intervention is fundamental. The rule against armed attack of the kind present in Korea or Suez is a basic norm of world order which the United Nations and its membership is committed to uphold. Reinforcing this norm through bilateral and collective arrangements of collective self-defense probably serves a constructive role so long as international institutions cannot be relied upon to take effective action in support of a victim of armed attack. If the concept of armed attack is restricted to direct border-crossing forms of aggression, then it is relatively easy to identify the situations in which resort to self-defense outside the UN, whether individual or collective, is appropriate; some world-wide consensus can usually be mobilized under such circumstances.

At what point does external support for an insurgency become equivalent to an armed attack? It is this question that highlights the ambiguity of the American presence, and makes the war in South Vietnam such a poor demonstration of the effectiveness of collective self-defense as a security device. It is a poor demonstration because of the apparent facts and background of the conflict. For one thing, the French lost in 1954 a war fought to control the *entire* territory of Vietnam. Recently Jean Lacouture has correctly pointed out that at Geneva "The West succeeded in wresting from the victors half the territory and the larger part of the material wealth of Vietnam. Ho agreed to fall back to the north in exchange for a promise that elections preparing the way for unification would be held in 1956—elections that he had no doubt of winning." The support given by the United States, then, to the regime of South Vietnam immediately and decisively undermined the expectations of all the principal participants at Geneva in 1954—that is, that the Geneva Agreements, if carried out, would lead eventually to the control of all of Vietnam by the Hanoi government. This earlier expectation cannot be overlooked in trying to determine the terms for a fair settlement of the present war in Vietnam.

## IV

Furthermore, the object of "defense" in Saigon is a regime of remarkably little viability. It would appear to be rather widely conceded

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that the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem, which first repudiated the Geneva concept, was instituted through the United States intervention. Succesive regimes have also been brought into being, in part at least, by U.S. intervention. The victim of attack, then, is an artificial entity that would not exist to be defended, nor would it request defense, if it had not been created and sustained by U.S. military and economic power. To justify defending such a government is to pervert the notion of self-defense—as the United States correctly felt the Russians perverted the same notion when they militarily intervened in Hungary to suppress the Nagy uprising in 1956.

The Saigon regime can be sustained only by a spiraling of U.S. commitments on a scale that seems out of all proportion to the matching North Vietnamese interventions on the side of the Vietcong. Despite the great military power of the United States, the Vietcong is said to control over eighty per cent of the country, and to have the ability to bring terror to the cities. The Vietnam story on escalation is agonizingly familiar. From military aid to military advisers to ever-increasing military forces—without in any way turning the tide of the war. In a sense, then, the war arising out of the 1954 arrangements at Geneva, if its outcome is measured by the original parameters of conflict, has long since been lost; in fact, several successive such "wars" have been "lost." The appearance of defeat has been somewhat avoided by changing the parameters of conflict through a series of very critical escalations of the U.S. military commitment, especially in terms of the numbers of American troops and the extension of violence to North Vietnam through bombing. If this is the way the United States deals with collective self-defense, it is not very comforting to those countries truly counting on us. From the viewpoint of the victim of attack it is better to be defended effectively from the outset or not at all; the worst possible reassurance is to be defended ineffectively but at ever-increasing magnitudes in a protracted conflict, the only function of the defense being to avoid the formal acknowledgment of defeat on the part of one's ally.

At some point, long since passed, the proxy quality of such a war becomes manifest to all. In Vietnam the Saigon regime functions as a puppet government without a real will of its own. It is the United States that seeks to end the war by negotiations undertaken in accord with its wishes, and appears on the international scene as the belligerent opposing the Vietcong. In effect, this combination of massive military intervention and political domination suggests that the original war in which the United States came to the defense of an embattled Saigon government has been lost and that a new one has begun in which the

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United States pits its own military might against the challenge of the Vietcong. Under such circumstances external aid to the Vietcong has, of course, also increased, though in a far less flamboyant manner. In fact, the relative invisibility of North Vietnamese military presence reinforces the impression that this second war is still being waged by a relatively autonomous South Vietnamese insurgency, receiving help on such a scale and on such terms as to leave political control, as nearly as we can tell, largely in the hands of the insurgents themselves. It is this realization that has prompted so many experts to commend formal and informal contacts directly with the leadership of the NLF, as against acting as if Hanoi asserts complete control over the insurgents in South Vietnam.

The war has significant asymmetries both in respect to the scale and visibility of military intervention by outside powers and in terms of the relative independence of the internal faction on whose behalf the intervention is taking place. A further asymmetry unfavorable to the U.S. is that the Vietcong is the beneficiary mainly of help from North Vietnam, a small state and a member of the region, whereas the Saigon regime receives help from a great power with neither a physical nor traditional presence in Southeast Asia. More than any other, this asymmetry intensifies the perception of the war as a Western effort to frustrate the realization of Asian ambitions in the post-colonial period.

## V

From the American point of view, even if one were to grant the validity of the extravagant role assumed by the United States in world affairs, fighting in Vietnam appears to be the wrong war in the wrong place waged for the wrong reasons. In general, a deviation from the basic legal restraints governing the use of military force in international affairs has led the United States to undertake action that is both ineffective and unpopular. The American role at the Bay of Pigs is the most prominent recent precedent. The United States is not able to altogether cast aside the restraints of international law. Instead, it tempers its use of force to moderate the illegal quality of the action and cut down the level of opposition in its own society. The result is a sort of compromise between pragmatics and law that leads to a failure of achievement and erodes the most basic limitations imposed by international law upon the discretion of states—rules governing the use of military force.

Bombing of North Vietnam is a dramatic illustration of this process. Bombing is clearly an illegal extension of the civil war to the territory of an external political entity, and not even an extension limited to the destruction of privileged sanctuary given to guerrillas. However, the non-military policy-makers have moderated the use of

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bombing in such a fashion as to assure that it will not be effective militarily. The consequence is an image of impotent unrestraint. Such an image seems frequently fostered when the United States casts aside respect for the rules and procedures of international law and embarks on military adventure. For the United States is not the sort of country that can mobilize a consensus within its own society for the effective use of military power when that use is in flagrant disregard of international law. This fortunate fact, if properly integrated into decision-making, suggests a beneficial set of limits upon American foreign policy.

The United States is, however, a country in which a consensus evidently can be mobilized in support of action that is at once moderately illegal and ineffective, but may nevertheless be very costly. In fact, the protracted quality of the war in Vietnam may cause more ultimate damage of every sort than if the United States would either conform altogether to governing rules of international law or ignore altogether legal and moral counsels of restraint in its recourse to military power. The dangers of the nuclear age and the values of the American policy make the imperialistic alternative highly unpalatable, although increasingly plausible to the extent that the realistic planners of military policy are frustrated by the incompatibility between the American mission in Vietnam and the military means needed to accomplish it.

The point is that the war in Vietnam has reached a level of intensity at which a fundamental orientation becomes essential. Accommodation of the two attitudes toward foreign policy is obviously unsatisfactory. Either the hawkish outlook must totally prevail with all its attendant risks and policies, including possibly the atomic mining of Haiphong and the nuclear bombing of Hanoi and China, or there must be a rather awkward retreat from the present position of military crusade, including possibly a concession of defeat in Vietnam, unilateral withdrawal, and a fundamental repudiation of the American option to use military power for purposes other than for genuine instances of self-defense against armed attack. The immediate consequence of such a reorientation of policy would be to rehabilitate the distinction between civil war and international war, and a recognition that the phenomena of civil war must be handled either locally or by community action under the auspices of a regional or international institution, but not conducted as an American operation. I would identify this reorientation of policy as cosmopolitan isolationism. It is a necessary part of the rethinking that might lead to an understanding of what would, under the circumstances in Vietnam, constitute a reasonable set of expectations for a peace settlement.

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Reginald E. Zelnik

# PRODIGAL FATHERS & EXISTENTIAL SONS

## A Report from Berkeley

A university as politically engaged as the University of California cannot help but become egocentric. Politically involved students automatically become the center of their own universe. The old joke about the Polish scholar who was doing a study of the elephant and the Polish question has a new application at Berkeley. Where others manage to center their concern on the question of Vietnam, here we deal with Vietnam and the Berkeley student movement. We always come back to the students, and the students to the university. If there is a rally on the Vietnam war, the chances are that a speaker will raise the question of university collusion with the Johnson Administration in prosecuting the war effort; if a student civil rights group accuses the Crown Zellerbach corporation of racial discrimination in Bogalusa, it is predictable that the speaker is building up to the point that the university obtains its paper materials from the same corporation. The same is likely to be true for a faculty member, although his emphasis is probably on the effects of the protest movement on the university. We try to talk about Vietnam, or Cuba, or civil rights. We end up by talking about ourselves.

How is this to be explained? There are, of course, justifiable reasons for arguing that certain social and political questions relate back to the university. As President Clark Kerr has emphasized, the modern state university has multiple ties with the society that surrounds it. These ties can be deeply disturbing to members of the academy who yearn for the ideal of a university where knowledge and truth are pursued in peace and calm, and where the only friction is that produced by the conflict of ideas. Those who long for such an ideal—and if my own experience has any relevance, the events of the past year have added to their number—find themselves the most frustrated by the present situation. The politically oriented student, on the other hand, is not in the least disturbed by the fact of university-community ties. His real concern is with the *nature* of those ties.

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An idea very much in vogue among partisans of the Free Speech Movement last year was the establishment of a "Free University of California," in opposition to our "unfree" university. Among the goals set for the "free university" was the establishment of classes on such topical questions as the eradication of racial discrimination in neighboring Oakland and the use of civil disobedience as a tactic against the corrupt Oakland power structure. One of the frequently repeated charges against the university administration was that it was subservient to the Oakland power structure, a charge that found some credibility in the university's apparent submission to pressures for prohibiting use of the campus as a point of origin for civil rights demonstrations in Oakland.

The success of the Free Speech Movement was predicated in part on the fact that the politically oriented students (and professors) and those professors who had reservations about the "multiversity" concept insofar as it conflicted with their ideal of the university as an independent center of learning, found themselves united in their distaste for the administration's subservience to extra-university pressures. That this unity was short-lived, was no accident. For in the long run the ideal of the independent center of learning proved to be as incompatible with the "free university" concept as it was with the "multiversity" concept. And while the "free university" plan never got off the ground, the attitude it embodied is still present. For those who see the university as an independent center of learning, the "free university" is little more than the "multiversity" turned on its head. The "free university" partisans accept the "multiversity" concept that the university should be a service institution for the surrounding community; the difference between the two lies in their attitudes toward the political and social status quo. Members of the Vietnam Day Committee denounce the university for countenancing professors who, it is claimed, advise the government on counter-insurgency tactics in Vietnam. If the "free university" were to materialize, however, it would almost certainly include a seminar oriented toward opposing the war.

In a similar vein, it is significant that a leader of last year's Free Speech Movement—which had as one of its cardinal points the belief that the university administration should never interfere with student political activities unless those activities directly impeded normal educational functions—publicly requested that the chancellor use his powers to cancel all classes during Vietnam Day (last October 15) in order to increase attendance at the political protest. Had the chancellor heeded this request, it is doubtful whether a word of protest would have come from the students who staunchly defended the principle of the university's political neutrality during last year's controversy.

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Are these apparent contradictions to be seen as tokens of hypocrisy? Nothing could be less accurate. Hypocrisy not only is not involved; revulsion *against* hypocrisy is an essential aspect of the dilemma. The students whom I am describing have made one consistent demand throughout the recent conflicts: that their elders—the faculty in particular—state openly what it is that they believe, and then act upon those beliefs. Their parents' failure to have done this in the past, a failure they extend to all of middle-class America, is a recurrent theme among them. Their professors are viewed as part of this middle-class America, and the slogan that "when the chips are down the professors cannot be trusted" is as common among the students as similar slogans once were about social-democrats.

But this is not the whole story. Without expectations there can be no disappointments; and yet, failures on the part of the faculty to take positions which the students equate with sincerity keep arousing fresh expressions of disappointment. Faith in the faculty seems to be replenished almost as quickly as it is destroyed, and destroyed as quickly as it is replenished. One sometimes has the feeling that an alternately supportive and disappointing faculty is emotionally more acceptable to some of our students than a consistently neutral one, and this may also be true of their attitude toward the university itself.

The demand that the students are really making upon the university, a demand that transcends all the specific programs of the FSM and other organizations, is that it *be like them,* that it fashion itself in their image.

When I was an undergraduate at Princeton some ten years ago, things were just the opposite. Then the university subtly demanded of its students that they be like *it,* fashioning themselves in its image. The style of Princeton and many of its professors drew the students like a magnet. The "multiversity" of the 1960s, on the other hand, finds it impossible to play this kind of role. To be a mediator among the conflicting interests of the community is no goal for idealistic youth, and arguments that such a role is essential for the functioning of the university within the body politic are unpersuasive. Even if the university really were what many faculty members wish it was, a self-contained community of scholars and apprentices, I doubt that it would prove very attractive to the students.

In any case, the present situation at Berkeley is that instead of the university setting standards for the students, the students are attempting to set standards for the university. When the university manages to meet these standards—as it does on occasion—there is elation; when it fails to

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meet these standards—as is more often true—it produces depression and in extreme cases revolt. In either case, the university, particularly the faculty, finds itself under constant scrutiny of the students, much as the students at Princeton found themselves under the constant scrutiny of the University. In the classroom we still give the examinations, but the moment we set foot outside the classroom the examinations are given to us. When Washington fails the test in foreign policy, so do we; when Oakland, California fails the test in civil rights, so do we. The burden is excessive, to say the least. For it is not the abandonment of the old concept of the university acting *in loco parentis* that is really being sought by the students, as some of them claimed last year. It is rather the transformation of the parent from the role of restrictor to the role of leader. To put it another way: the thesis is the students in the streets; the antithesis is the faculty attempting to keep the students off the streets; and the synthesis demanded is the faculty leading the students down the streets. When the demand is not met—as it probably never will be—the reaction is to rub the nose of the university in the mud of Vietnam, Oakland, and Bogalusa. The university either gives ground—as it did last year when the issue was such as to make its own guilt clearly apparent—or it fights back. If it fights back, the situation only becomes further exacerbated, and the university finds itself directly involved against its will. The accusation of university complicity then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, the more so in that outside pressures never fail to limit its flexibility. Seen from the vantage point of the students, if the university is not man enough (the anthropomorphism is deliberate) to take on General Ky, or President Johnson, it should at least be man enough to throw down the gauntlet to the local power structure. The alternative is a direct conflict between the prodigal father and the existential son.

This cycle will continue, on a greater or lesser scale, until such time as the students abandon their emotional involvement with the university, that is, until they cease to expect it to be like them. The precondition for this is the integration of student protest into university life (combined, perhaps, with an admixture of exhaustion).* This integration will probably be completed when a set of permanent regulations governing campus political activity is established (providing that they are based on the principles of the Free Speech Movement and the faculty resolution of December 8, 1964), and when student government obtains the right to take positions on controversial political and social questions. These and other measures currently under discussion would have the effect of insti-

* There are, at present, concrete signs of both these developments.

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tutionalizing student political activity as an integral aspect of university life, thus eliminating certain important areas of conflict. The relationship of the students to the university would then cease to be personal and existential, and instead become coldly political and hopefully, at least luke-warmly educational. Everyone's life would be easier, and the students' demands on the university would be substantially reduced.

If and when this happens, is it possible that we will have lost more than we have gained? This is obviously a matter of personal preference, but at least a brief case should be made in favor of the status quo, by which I mean the continued existence of a healthy tension between student moralists and the university. I believe that the attitude of the present generation of students toward the university represents in microcosm a broader attitude towards the country as a whole. More students are protesting the war in Vietnam than protested the Korean War not only because the case against it is much clearer, but also because the students of today have a much clearer image of the standards they want their country to live up to than did the students of the previous decade. Defenders of the war who argue that *all* wars produce atrocities, that the foreign policies of all major powers must be based on *Realpolitik* rather than on Christian or secular humanism, make little headway among the students because the students have a vision of America that corresponds to their image, however self-righteous, of themselves. Critics of the students have accused them of not taking the textbook version of American values seriously, and this may be true in some cases. But in most cases they are taking it very seriously indeed, one might almost say dogmatically; and their seriousness is an important measure of the difficulties encountered by persons who, like myself, have attempted to channel their protests in a more political and pragmatic direction. America, like the university, has something to gain from being morally informed by the voice of what one writer has called its "unkempt prophets." But while the university has reacted by assimilating some of the important lessons that the students have taught it, while rejecting some of the excesses, the government is in a position to close its ears. This is why their voices have grown increasingly shrill and sometimes unbearable. If the students ever stop complaining about the university, it may well be a sign that they have abandoned hope. If they stop protesting about American politics, the situation will indeed be hopeless. As regards the university, there is reason to be optimistic.

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Dennis H. Wrong

# THE IDEA OF "COMMUNITY": A CRITIQUE

The "loss of community" in modern society has become a major theme in contemporary social criticism. One could even say that the discipline of sociology begins with a concern over the decline of such traditional forms of association as small towns, neighborhoods, religious congregations and social classes, following upon that "creative destruction" we call the Industrial Revolution. Books with titles such as "The Quest for Community" or "The Eclipse of Community" have a contemporary resonance extending far beyond the circle of social scientists or even the educated public.[1] Used as a counter-concept to "mass society," "anomie," "rootlessness," and similar terms, "community" replaces the more politically focused labels of the past. Emphasis on the erosion of traditional ties that once bound men together becomes central to most sociological thinking that goes beyond the technicism of fact-finding and/or abstract theory-building.

The intellectual prestige of sociology since World War II is largely a result of a decline in political faith among Western intellectuals. One of the most influential sociological interpretations of extremist political movements defines them as efforts to create a new "community of ideology" to supplant traditional group allegiances that have been destroyed by rapid social change. Students of totalitarianism have shown how the psychic dependence of militant supporters frees its leaders from bondage to the manifest ideology that is the movement's ostensible *raison d'être*. Totalitarian leaders possess, therefore, a flexibility of political maneuver that is unavailable to power-seeking groups demanding a less than total commitment from their supporters. The paradox of totalitarian movements is that they are able to combine a fanatical following of "true believers" with a political strategy that is almost entirely opportunistic and in no way constrained by an official creed. Totalitarian movements are "orthodoxies without doctrines," as Raymond Aron once said, because their unity is founded on the community of ideology they create

1 See, for example, Robert Nisbet, *The Quest for Community*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1953; Maurice R. Stein, *The Eclipse of Community*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1960.

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rather than on any definitive political goals affirmed by their ideology.

European writers who have described modern industrial society as a "mass society" in which men are lost and rootless, have seen it as inherently prone to produce destructive, ideologically fanaticized mass movements. This alleged political consequence of mass society, however, has never had such plausibility when applied to America. Impressed by the stability of the American political order, an influential group of political sociologists in this country has denied that the United States is a mass society and characterized it instead as "pluralist." But these writers slur over the fact that America remains the classic land of "mass culture," impersonal large-scale bureaucracy and population mobility. As Hannah Arendt remarks, the American body politic "has at least endured to the present day, in spite of the fact that the specifically modern character of the modern world has nowhere else produced such extreme expressions in all nonpolitical spheres of life as it has in the United States."[2]

To recognize the search for community as a major force in American life need not commit us to apocalyptic theories of mass society that see totalitarianism as the inevitable outcome. Tendencies that have elsewhere found expression in organized mass movements may be contained by the American political system; but still they do exist and manifest themselves in nonpolitical forms. Commitment to an "ideology of community," rather than the attempt to create a "community of ideology," has been a characteristic American response to mass society, although it is, of course, by no means peculiarly American. Even the recent political activism of young people has combined political goals like civil rights and world peace with heavy rhetorical emphasis on such nonpolitical concerns as the overcoming of alienation, sexual freedom, and the need for generational solidarity.

Since awareness of loss of community in modern society is over a century old, we need to recognize that responses to this awareness have become part of the very social reality we seek to understand. The increasing popularity of sociological accounts of our plight has created an ideology of community that shapes our social relations, or at least our consciousness of them, in much the same way that popular Freudianism shapes our psychological self-awareness.

We need go back only as far as the 1930s to find a change in the conditions and institutions alleged to be responsible for our "lack of community." In that decade leading social critics complained of the competitiveness of men under capitalism, their ruthless pursuit of wealth

2 Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future,* New York: The Viking Press, p. 140.

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and success, and their preference for "making good" over "being good," to use a phrase of Margaret Mead's. The goal of success was held to be demoralizing when all are urged to pursue it under circumstances where opportunities are highly unequal. These indictments of American society were clearly influenced by socialism in its various forms and by the New Deal. Changes in the structure of the economy achieved by political means were looked to for the creation of a community that would substitute fraternal cooperation for divisive competition. With varying emphases, these themes are central to the writing of the 1930s of such moral scientists as Margaret Mead, the Lynds, Ruth Benedict, Abram Kardiner, Robert K. Merton, Lawrence Frank and others.

Today, at least on the surface, the complaints seem to be just the opposite. There is too much "community," not enough individualism; too much conformity to others and sensitivity to their feelings rather than indifference; too great a readiness to participate in collective tasks as opposed to sturdy independence. David Riesman has argued that middle-class Americans today are more like the Zuni Indians, described and idealized by Ruth Benedict in her *Patterns of Culture*, than like the status-proud Kwakiutl, whom she, like Thorstein Veblen before her, saw as caricaturing American competitive values. Business organizations are criticized—by William H. Whyte, for example—not for ruthless exploitation, but for being big happy families eager to transform their employees into self-satisfied "organization men." If the critics of the 1930s were futuristic in outlook, hopeful for a new social order, the critics of the 1950s were nostalgic, looking back to a more individualistic past.

The contrast between these two styles of criticism is bewildering. Is it just that the fashionable values of intellectuals have changed? Or have Americans taken to heart the earlier criticisms and overdone it in trying to rectify them? Daniel Bell has argued for the latter:

> The early theorists of mass society condemned it because in the vast metropolitan honeycombs people were isolated, transient, anonymous to each other. Americans, sensitive as they are to the criticisms of others, took the charge to heart and, in building the postwar suburbs, sought to create fraternity, communality, togetherness, only to find themselves accused of conformity.[3]

Although Bell is correct in maintaining that the American middle class has responded anxiously to its critics, he too readily dismisses their complaints as stemming merely from the ideological bias of "European sociology." The very receptivity of the audience indicates that an exposed nerve has been touched. Very often the critics combine in apparently

[3] Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*, New York: Collier Books, 1961, p. 36.

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contradictory ways the older themes attributing the absence of community to competitive and hostile men, with the new-style complaints about the smothering conformism of life in suburbia. However, as Bell acknowledges, the various targets of criticism are dialectically related. An ethic of conformism, the search for suburban oases and the loyalties of organization men are responses to the conditions described by the *earlier* critics: urban anonymity, social and geographical mobility, and the values of competitive individualism, which have for so long been characteristic of America and have by no means disappeared.

There are a number of different emphases in recent social criticism centering on the themes of loss of community and conformity.

Writers who are not professional social scientists frequently confine themselves, in the name of individualism, to a straightforward attack on all contemporary forms of group life, from suburban togetherness to the "engineered consent" of the mass media and the imposed uniformity of authoritarian political movements. Present-day targets are simply latter-day versions of Babbitt and Main Street and the critics remain in the tradition of the revolt against village, church and provincial bourgeoisie that initiated a new trend in American writing some decades ago. This critical perspective is not based on an ideology of community. It merely asserts with refreshing directness the need for protecting individuality from *any* social pressures. It is often essentially aesthetic in outlook, defending the antinomianism of the creative artist as an ultimate value. Frequently it tends to become nostalgic in tone, idealizing the small-town and nineteenth century past, overlooking the tyrannies of Main Street, and picturing our grandfathers as firm, principled "characters" in contrast to the flabby, herd-men of today. It thus contributes to an indigenous American nostalgia which, in the absence of any systematic conservative ideology, is exploited by promoters of right-wing causes.

This brand of social criticism, while blunt, often zestful in its assaults on institutions and fashions, and always needed, has limitations from the point of view of both the professional sociologist and the social critic who has learned from the sociologists. For the sociologist, the relation between individual and society is always a crucial problem. Sociology itself began with the sense of a disturbance in the relation between individuals and society created by the modern political and technological revolutions. The sociologist's very definition of man asserts that he is profoundly shaped by the group, by the dominant values of society; in consequence the sociological critic cannot, without violating his professional conscience, confine himself to affirming the values of individualism and personal autonomy while failing to consider the social context

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in which these values might be realized. To see the community merely as something to be resisted, as the source of false identities which stifle an essentially private self, is to deny that men live in communities as naturally as fish in water and that their private selves are necessarily closely intertwined with a self shaped by public pressures.

Accordingly, critics influenced by sociology locate the source of individual malaise in the fragmentation and disorder of modern society rather than in society's demands for conformity as such. At its most simplistic, such an approach stands in direct opposition to the moral and aesthetic defense of the individual against the claims of society, to which I have previously referred.[4] Though the more perceptive sociological critics, such as David Riesman, Erich Fromm and W. H. Whyte, have assigned part of the blame for contemporary conformism to the popularity of vulgarized versions of social science, these writers are nevertheless themselves sociologically sophisticated and are not content merely to re-assert the values of individualism in face of the imperatives of modern social organization. By singling out "status-seeking" as a major target of criticism, they often manage to combine the anti-capitalist attack on competitiveness of the 1930s, the moral-aesthetic defense of individuality against pressures towards conformity, and the more recent indictments of suburban and organizational groupism. The compulsive quest for status weakens community by pitting people against one another as competitors while at the same time encouraging frantic conformity to the shifting group fashions that set the terms on which status is granted. Unlike the material acquisitiveness condemned by the critics of the thirties, competition for status both unites and divides people, creating what Riesman (borrowing a term from William Graham Sumner) has labeled "antagonistic cooperation." Hence the prevalence of judgments such as the following:

> In the desert of the suburb, community life has lost whatever vestiges of meaning it ever had for Americans; if any community life exists at all, it exists frantically at the synthetic level of the club and church; it has a tinny quality betraying a lack of conviction on the part of all concerned. Nowhere is there more consciousness of the need for community; nowhere does this consciousness of need reveal more clearly its hopelessness.[5]

The diagnosis of our discontents put forward by these sociological critics is often a convincing and powerful one. Their sociological real-

[4] See, for example, Everett K. Wilson, "Conformity Revisited," St. Louis: *Trans-Action*, 2 (Nov.-Dec. 1964), pp. 28–32, and the rebuttals to Wilson by Dennis H. Wrong and Ernest van den Haag, pp. 33–36.

[5] William J. Newman, *The Futilitarian Society*, New York: George Braziller, p. 355.

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ism saves them from the kind of purely romantic protests against modern life which refuse to recognize social necessities as distinct from the demands of the individual psyche. But because they no longer believe in the political solutions favored by their predecessors of the thirties the specificity of their diagnosis stands in marked contrast to the vagueness and virtual absence of any prescribed remedy.

In general terms, the restoration of a "true" or "organic" community is seen as the ultimate remedy. The goal is a community which will both bind men together in intimate, fraternal relations and at the same time allow individuality to flourish. "It almost seems as if community in the anthropological sense is necessary before human maturity or individuation can be achieved, while this same maturity is, in turn, a prerequisite for community," as Maurice Stein puts it.[6] The call for the re-creation of community maintains a link between contemporary sociology and the conservative critique of modernity first formulated in the aftermath of the French Revolution.[7] For, "if there is one thing certain about the 'organic community,' it is that it has always gone," as Raymond Williams remarks.[8] Some convince themselves, like George Orwell, that it was there in their childhoods, others locate its last incarnation in the vanished rural village or small town, in nineteenth century bourgeois society, in the Medieval commune or in the *polis* of the ancient world. Others, like Stein, go all the way back to primitive societies to discover models of community "in the anthropological sense."

These nostalgic excursions into history end in remarkably similar exhortations. Bewailing the disappearance of organic community, the literary critic F. R. Leavis, writing in 1932, concludes: "We must beware of simple solutions . . . there can be no mere going back . . . the memory of the old order must be the chief incitement towards a new."[9] Nearly thirty years later, Maurice Stein, a sociologist, strikes the identical note: "There is little to be gained by sentimentalizing about primitive life or advocating a return to it in any form. We are far too deeply committed to urban-industrial civilization even to think of abandoning it now."[10] The problem is seen as that of realizing community under the new conditions of urban-industrial mass civilization.

The trouble, however, is that this insistence on community as a value apart from its concrete manifestations produces precisely the

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6 Stein, *op. cit.* p. 248.

7 A recent account of sociology's conservative intellectual pedigree is Nisbet, *op. cit.*

8 Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society,* New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1960, p. 277.

9 Quoted by Williams, *Ibid.,* p. 279.

10 Stein, *loc. cit.*

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aborted forms of striving for group adjustment that the social critics themselves condemn. The anxious audience reads the critics and, made self-conscious about community, strives to sink roots in the suburbs, to define occupational groups as devoted brotherhoods, and to stress the importance of belongingness in child-rearing. Made aware of the loss of community, the audience tries to create out of whole cloth a social ethic and a true community. The effort is analogous to that of those Americans who have made popular psychiatry the basis of a personal ethic, becoming self-conscious, even hypochondriacal, about their "mental health," which comes to be seen as the goal of life instead of as the by-product of a life with meaningful goals. The error lies in conceiving of community as a kind of end-in-itself, apart from the particular activities and functions that actually bind people together, and apart from those values that constitute a truly shared vision of life. As Ortega once pointed out, "People do not live together merely to be together. They live together to do something together."

Thus the social critics who deplore status-seeking and the mechanical kind of community of our Park Forests, paradoxically perpetuate the conditions they complain of when they re-assert the values of *true* community and *stable* identity. They end up providing their audience with a new and updated ideology of community, reminding one of books on child-rearing that tell parents not to rely on books on child-rearing but to be "spontaneous." The very willingness to follow the prescribed antidote to the disease is a symptom of the disease and indeed aggravates it. Even status-seeking—the target of attack most closely linking the older social criticism directed against ruthless individualism to the newer charges of over-conformity—receives a kind of sociological warrant (as in Vance Packard's book, which has been aptly described as a pornography of social class in America). For status requires validation by others and implies shared values in a way that money or power as goals do not. But the emphasis is on the sharing of values rather than on their content.

The ideology of community thus provides the basis for a popular social criticism that influences its audience in ways providing new material for the critics to assault. Just as psychoanalytic therapy, which originally presupposed a stable social world with relatively fixed moral standards incorporated into the patient's superego, is now itself often expected to provide the values and meaningful life-goals the individual feels he lacks; so sociology is looked to in the hope that it will itself remedy the loss of community. The result is that clichés about group "integration," "role-playing," "identity," "belongingness" and "we-feelings" fill the vacuum.

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Consequently, instead of a genuine conformity based on shared values, we find *conformism*—the belief, rarely articulated as such, that one should act, think and feel as others do for its own sake. Instead of a status system in which individuals are rated according to stable dominant values, we find *status-seeking* in which status itself becomes a value no matter what the terms on which it is awarded. Instead of loyalty to families, churches, local communities, occupational associations and other established groups with multiple purposes and often possessing deep roots in the past, loyalty attaches itself to functional organizations, thus making a specialized collective instrumentality into an end-in-itself. Erich Kahler's distinction between a *community* and a *collective* is relevant here: "Collectives develop through the joining of pre-established individuals for some specific purpose. Collectives are established by common *ends,* communities derive from common *origins.*"[11] To Max Weber, the modern mood of "disenchantment of the world" was the result of the spread of bureaucracy, of the proliferation of functional organizations organized to pursue limited goals and lacking the aura of sacredness traditionally associated with family, church and nation. But Weber did not anticipate the "organization man" who strives to invest bureaucracy with the intrinsic value and loyalty usually given to these older forms of association.

The achievement of community, like the achievement of mental health (or, for that matter, of happiness, as John Stuart Mill argued a century ago), cannot come from pursuing it directly as a goal but only as a by-product of the shared pursuit of more tangible goals and activities. Community may result from the concrete forms of political, economic, familial and cultural association among men, but it cannot be willed into existence by exhorting people to immerse themselves in group activity and to find greater significance in their social identities. The inevitable failure of the ideology of community to deliver the elusive good it promises then gives rise to a social criticism that at its worst simply becomes a counter-ideology making a shibboleth of "nonconformity" or exploiting a romanticized version of an allegedly more individualistic American past.

The failures and inconsistencies of recent social criticism suggest that there are limits to what we are entitled to expect from social science in general and sociology in particular as a source of remedies for our deeper discontents. Sociology can analyze the events and processes that have destroyed older values and forms of community; it cannot create new ones. Only moral, religious and political inspiration can do that.

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11 Erich Kahler, *The Tower and the Abyss,* New York: George Braziller, 1957, p. 87.

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Lewis Coser

# THE MYTH OF PEASANT REVOLT

Only rarely does a book immediately convey a sense that it will rank among the influential works of the time. Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth** is just such a book. It is badly written, badly organized and chaotic. The author's reasoning is often shoddy and obviously defective. But all this is finally unimportant. This is not a work of analysis. Its incantatory prose appeals not to the intellect but to the passions. Its author wished to create a modern myth, and he must be ranked among the very few great mythopoeists of our age even by those who, like myself, think he has created an evil myth.

"Myths," wrote George Sorel, "are not descriptions of things, but expressions of a determination to act. . . . A myth cannot be refuted, since it is, at bottom, identical with the conviction of a group, being the expression of these convictions in the language of movement." "One must not try to analyze such complexes of pictures," he added, "as one would break down a thing into its elements; one must take them as a whole, as historical forces, and . . . must above all refrain from comparing actual accomplishments with the images of them that had been generally accepted before the action." It is such a myth that Frantz Fanon has created and I venture to think that it will have an enduring influence in the world of politics and ideas, perhaps more so than Sorel's own myth of the General Strike.

Frantz Fanon was born in 1925, on the island of Martinique in the French West Indies. He studied medicine in France and specialized in psychiatry. During the Algerian revolt against French domination, Fanon was assigned to an Algerian hospital and soon threw in his lot with the revolutionists to become one of their major ideological spokesmen. Out of this experience came two books, *The Year V of the Algerian Revolution* and the present volume, first published in France in 1961. Fanon died of cancer, at the age of thirty-six, soon after the book appeared.

*The Wretched of the Earth* could be read as yet another indictment of the evils of colonialism, but so to understand it would by-pass its real importance. Fanon wishes to do a great deal more. He wishes to show how the native, degraded by his conquerors, can reconquer himself. The book is, above all, an apologia for violence. The violence of the conquest, he argues, has dehumanized the native and only counter-violence can make

* *The Wretched of the Earth,* by Frantz Fanon. New York: Grove Press. 255 pp. $5.00.

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him whole again. ". . . Violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect. . . . For the native, life can spring up again out of the rotting corpse of the settler." Violence is the only effective individual and social therapy; it helps overcome a schism of the soul which has been caused by colonialist contempt, and it wields together a body social which had been rent by the colonial system. "Violence unifies the people."

In Sorel's hands the myth of violence had a somewhat bloodless character. Sorel was, to be sure, a man given to apocalyptic visions, yet upon inspection his heroic violence turns out to be more literary than real, more a figure of speech than a concretely envisioned event. This safely settled petty-bourgeois moralist dreamed of heroic virtues, but fantasies of a real blood bath seem to have been utterly alien to him. Matters stand very differently with Fanon. He was a marginal man, torn from his moorings, most of his adult life working in the world of French medical professionals without being of that world. Scarred and humiliated, stripped of his previous identity, he searched for redeeming wholeness through a cataclysmic destruction. To him, the call to violence, the belief in its redeeming quality, is no rhetorical device; he means it. He believed in the cleansing quality of the knife, the gun, the bomb. Only these, he thought, can make colonial man whole again. During the Mau-Mau revolt, it was required, he writes, "that each member of the group should strike a blow at the victim. Each one was thus personally responsible for the death of that victim. To work means to work for the death of the settler. This assumed responsibility for violence allows both strayed and outlawed members of the group to come back again and to find their place once more, to become integrated. Violence is thus seen as comparable to a royal pardon. The colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence. This rule of conduct enlightens the agent because it indicates to him the means and the end."

Anti-colonial violence is to Fanon the only way to bring about a total transformation in the former colonies. It leads to a comprehensive transvaluation of values. "Without any period of transition, there is a total, complete and absolute substitution." All decolonization creates a *tabula rasa* at the outset, and this is the precondition for all further advances. Decolonization does not mean the substitution of one kind of regime for another; it signifies total rebirth and it can only be the work of new men, men reborn through acts of violence.

Fanon is at his most original when he attempts to locate potential revolutionary actors within the structure of colonial societies. Here he departs most markedly from classical Marxist theory. Very little, he argues, can be expected of the embryonic working class. The workers enjoy a comparatively privileged position. They may be the most faithful followers of the nationalist parties but when the chips are down, they realize that they have much to lose when the colonial regime is overthrown. By virtue of the privileged position they hold in the

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colonial system, they constitute a "bourgeois" faction of the colonized people. Pampered, and sheltered from the worst slights and the worst misery, they can easily be bought off. So much for the traditional proletarian vanguard of the Marxist textbooks.

Nor is there reason to believe that the national bourgeoisie can play a role. It has none of the characteristics of its Western counterpart. It "is not engaged in production, nor in invention, nor building, nor labor; it is completely canalized into activities of the intermediary type. Its innermost vocation seems to be to keep in the running and to be part of the racket." Fanon treats this national bourgeoisie with a withering contempt which is only matched by his contempt for the assimilationist and partly Westernized intelligentsia. If the working class can be bought off and the national bourgeoise is "good for nothing" where, then, can the true agents of total transformation be found? Here Fanon, true to an age-old millenarian tradition which, by the way, strongly informed the thought of the young Marx, answers: Only those who are totally disinherited, those who have nothing to lose in the old system can be the architects of the new. The biblical "The last shall be first and the first last" runs like a refrain through the book.

The last in colonial society are the peasants and they are hence the true agents of the revolution. ". . . The peasants alone are revolutionary, for they have nothing to lose and everything to gain. The starving peasant, outside the class system, is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays. For him there is no compromise, no possible coming to terms." The anti-colonial revolution must hence be a peasant revolution. Yet this revolution, in order to succeed, must of necessity spread from the countryside into the towns. A peasant *maquis* can hardly be expected to take the cities. Here the mass of ex-peasants, settled in the huts and shanty towns around the fringe of the city, assumes a major strategic role. The city *lumpen-proletariat* is the predestined ally of the rural masses. "The *lumpen-proletariat,* that horde of starving men, uprooted from their tribe and from their clan, constitutes one of the most spontaneous and the most radically revolutionary forces of colonized people." They have not yet found "a bone to gnaw in the colonial system." They are physically near the city but spiritually very far from it. Their very presence is "the sign of the irrevocable decay, the gangrene ever present at the heart of colonial domination. So the pimps, the hooligans, the unemployed and the petty criminals, urged on from behind, throw themselves into the struggle for liberation like stout working men. These classless idlers will by militant and decisive action discover the path that leads to nationhood." Truly, the last will be the first.

Fanon plays many variations upon the theme of the revolt of the wretched, the eruption of colonial society, bringing to the fore the new heroic man created in and through revolutionary violence. But what after the morrow of victory? Will the heroic days of struggle not be followed by the dullness of quotidien routine? This is a persistent danger of which Fanon is acutely aware. "During the

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struggle for liberation the leader awakened the people and promised them a forward march, heroic and unmitigated. Today, he uses every means to put them to sleep, and three or four times a year asks them to remember the colonial period and to look back on the long way they have come since then. . . . After independence, the party sinks into an extraordinary lethargy . . . the local party leaders are given administrative posts, the party becomes an administration, and the militants disappear in the crowd and take the empty title of citizen . . ." When the revolution grows cold, its leaders tend to develop into cold and calculating monsters. Once it freezes into bureaucratic mould, it becomes but a means for the advancement of its functionaries, and the pursuit of their private pleasures replaces the heroic dedication to public revolt. But all of this, thinks Fanon, while an ever present danger, is not a necessary outcome.

The revolution can be saved provided it is not halted prematurely, and provided it remains permanent. The soft life of the city must not be allowed to corrupt the new governing elites. The city, to Fanon, is always corrupting. He hates it with the traditional hatred of the peasant; it is to him the true whore of Babylon. The city represents softness and relaxation in contrast to the lean and hard energy and dedication of the countryside. Hence only geographic decentralization of power can save the revolution. Revolutionary virtue can be maintained in the village square; it will inevitably succumb to the vices of the city if power comes to be centered in the capital.

The anti-colonial revolution is primarily a revolution of the peasant people and it can maintain itself only as long as it remains rooted in that people. The party, the leaders, once arrived in power will attempt to exclude the people from participation. They will say that the people are too ignorant, that they do not understand the intricacies of political decision-making. These are self-serving lies. "Everything can be explained to the people, on the single condition that you really want them to understand . . . when the people are invited to partake in the management of the country, they do not slow the movement down but on the contrary speed it up." Hence the birth of a national bourgeoisie or of a privileged caste of bureaucrats must be vigorously opposed. The masses must be educated so that they can form the politically decisive arms of the revolution. If this is done, the nation will become a living reality to each of its citizens.

The book closes with a violent diatribe against European civilization. "Europe undertook the leadership of the world with ardor, cynicism and violence . . . Europe has declined all humility and all modesty; but she has also set her face against all solicitude and all tenderness . . . she has only shown herself parsimonious and niggardly where men are concerned; it is only men that she has killed and devoured . . . today we know with what sufferings humanity has paid for every one of their [the Europeans'] triumphs of the mind." European civilization, Fanon argues, by its very success in taming the forces of nature, has only succeeded in dehumanizing man—colonial man in the first place,

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but ultimately, European man also. Hence Fanon's message, and this distinguishes him from almost all previous colonial rebels, rejects the whole heritage of Europe. He declines to accept guidance even from the West's revolutionaries. Corrupted to the core, the West can teach nothing but death of the soul. "So, comrades," says Fanon on his last page, "let us not pay tribute to Europe by creating states, institutions and societies which draw their inspiration from her." Most previous colonial revolutionaries paid tribute to the West in the very act of revolting against it. Fanon's myth involves a much more profound rejection than do the ideologies of a Ghandi or of a Nehru, a Lenin, or a Stalin. He warns the nations of the Third World that they should not create a Third or Fourth Rome, a pale imitation of a civilization, decaying at its very roots.

Spengler coined the term "historical pseudomorphosis" to "designate those cases in which an older alien culture lies so massively over the land that a young culture, born in this land, cannot get its breath and fails not only to achieve pure and specific expression-forms, but even to develop fully its own self-consciousness. All that wells up from the depth of the young soul is cast in the old moulds, young feelings stiffen in senile works, and instead of rearing itself up in its own creative power, it can only hate the distant power with a hate that grows to be monstrous." It is to prevent such a state of affairs that Fanon has fashioned his myth.

If, contrary to Sorel's prescription, one compares actual accomplishments with the mythical images that Fanon set forth only a few years ago, one is brought up against the fact that the book has already dated. The Algeria of Boumedienne bears but little resemblance to the peasant democracy of which Fanon dreamed. The tough military men who now run independent Algeria presumably look at men like Fanon as ideologists whose usefulness to the regime has long been exhausted. African rulers have grown fat on resources pumped out of the countryside and they have flocked to the central cities where they build skyscrapers and airports, slavishly imitating Western models. The peasants have fallen back into the immemorial routines of traditional life styles; sometimes they are prodded into the world of modernity by tax collectors, recruiting sergeants, or party organizers. The peasants' lot differs in the various new nations, to be sure, but in none of them have they become history-making subjects, as Fanon expected and hoped. Everywhere they are the subjects of historical processes over which they have, at best, only minimal control. The specific weight of the peasantry in the political life of the underdeveloped nations is low indeed and the tutelary power of the new states comes to lie as heavily on today's peasantry as it rested upon them in the colonial past.

Fanon's picture hardly fits the reality of 1966. Yet it would be foolish to dismiss his work as a mere regressive fantasy—though it may be that, too. The myth that he has helped to create will stay alive, I believe, precisely because the reality of the new nations departs so very crucially from the image he has drawn. The peasantry does make up the great majority in these nations and will remain so for

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a very long time to come. Peasant discontent will persist as a consequence of the dislocation of traditional styles of life which the modernizing regimes attempt to institute. Fanon was quite right, of course, when he noted that the young working class and the bulk of the Westernized intelligentsia would not, as a whole, play a revolutionary role in the history of the new nations. They have tasted power or gained at least a modicum of higher standards of living, and they are most probably not willing to risk these. But it is conceivable that dissatisfied peasants may come to learn of this book in due course and make it a kind of breviary for their aspirations. Yet while the future, contrary to what Fanon believed, belongs to the city and not the countryside, the death throes of traditional peasant society will last for a very long time and may well be punctured by uprisings and revolts, a variey of peasant *Jacqueries*. And even though I believe them ultimately doomed to failure, they may for a time, perhaps in alliance with disaffected city intellectuals, create large revolutionary movements. Africa may see a repeat performance of Europe's peasant revolts before it enters the new world of modernity. For quite some time to come, the new rulers of the African nations will be faced by the specter of peasant uprisings and disaffection—and Fanon's myth will haunt them, much as the Communist Manifesto and *its* myth haunted the mill owners of Victorian Europe.

In the West this book will be read for a long time and might indeed become a bible for romantic rebels and sophisticated university students in quest of primeval revolutionary innocence. Jean Paul Sartre's incredibly naive Introduction gives a foretaste of what may be in store. A man who can speak in earnest about North African Arabs, of all people, "recovering their lost innocence" can believe anything – anything, that is, which feeds his anti-Western masochism.

It seems hardly necessary to say here that I consider Fanon's myth an evil and destructive vision. I find his view of violence as a healer profoundly mistaken. Violence may sometimes be necessary, but those who wield it systematically cannot help becoming brutalized by it. And this holds true for colonizer and native alike. Similarly, I think that the course Fanon charts for the new nations is not only morally dubious but politically inept and self-defeating. What I have tried here is to convey Fanon's symptomatic importance rather than engage in refutations of his views.

One must never forget while reading Fanon's book that it was written in anguish and heartbreak, even though one might recognize in it elements of a "paranoid style" with which we have become familiar in many a sinister context. The vision which informs the book may be profoundly repellent, but we must not forget that the violence and hatred it breathes on every page is a reactive violence, a testimony to the havoc the white man has loosed upon Africa. Finally, one might hope that the myth Fanon has wrought may move some Western men to that compassion and sense of fraternity with the downtrodden of Africa which Fanon —who expected only white hatred and, at best, condescension—plainly believed impossible.

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# NOTEBOOK

Norman Mailer

## On Cannibals and Christians

List the symptoms. We live in a time which has created the art of the absurd. It is our art. It contains happenings, pop art, camp, a theater of the absurd, a homosexual genius who spent thirty years as a thief; black humor is its wit, the dances are livid and solitary—they are also orgiastic: orgy or masturbation—the first question posed by the art of the absurd. So the second: is the art rational or absurd? Do we have the art because the absurd is the patina of waste, and we are waiting in the pot for the big roar of waters when the world goes down the pipe? Or are we face to face with a desperate but most rational effort from the deepest resources of the unconscious of us all to rescue civilization from the pit and plague of its bedding, that gutted swinish foul old bedding on which two centuries of imperialism, high finance, moral hypocrisy and horror have lain? The skulls of black men and the bowels of the yellow race are in that bed, the death of the Bride of the Sabbath is in that bed with the ashes of the concentration camp and the ashes of the Kabbala; moonshots fly like flares across black dreams, and the Beatles—demons or saints?—give shape to a haircut which looks from the rear like nothing so much as an atomic cloud. Apocalypse or debauch is upon us. And we are close to dead. There are faces and bodies like gorged maggots on the dance floor, on the highway, in the city, in the stadium; they are a host of chemical machines who swallow the product of chemical factories, aspirin, preservatives, stimulant, relaxant, and breathe out their chemical wastes into a polluted air. The sense of a long last night over civilization is back again; it has perhaps not been here so intensely in thirty years, not since the Nazis were prospering, but it is creeping back.

Well, it has been the continuing obsession of this writer that the world is entering a time of plague. And the continuing metaphor for the obsession —a most disagreeable metaphor—has been cancer. The argument is old by now: its first assumption is that cancer is a disease different from other diseases, an ultimate disease against which all other diseases are in design to protect us.

The difficulty—for one can always convince the literary world to accept a metaphor if one remains loyal to it —is that my obsession is not merely an obsession, I fear, but insight into the nature of things, perhaps the deepest insight I have, and this said with no innocence of the knowledge that the plague can have its home within, and these condemnations come to no more than the grapplings of a man with a curse on his flesh, or even

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the probability that society partakes of the plague, and its critic partakes, and each wars against the other, the man and the society each grappling with his own piece of the plague, as if, indeed, we are each of us born not only with our life but with our death, with our variety of death, good death and bad, and it is the act of each separate man to look to free himself from that part of his existence which was born with the plague. Some succeed, some fail, and some of us succeed nobly for we clear our own plague and help to clear the plague upon the world, and others succeed, others, are we those? you don't know who clear their plague by visiting it upon friends, passing their disease into the flesh and mind of near bodies, and into the circuits of the world. And they poison the wells and get away free, some of them—they get away free if there is a devil and he has power, and that is something else we do not know. But the plague remains, that mysterious force which erects huge ugly and aesthetically emaciated buildings as the world ostensibly grows richer, and proliferates new diseases as medicine presumably grows wiser, non-specific diseases, families of viruses, with new names and no particular location. And products deteriorate in workmanship as corporations improve their advertising, wars shift from carnage and patriotism to carnage and surrealism, sex shifts from whiskey to drugs. And all the food is poisoned. And the waters of the sea, we are told. And there is always the sound of some electric motor in the ear.

In a modern world which produces mediocrities at an accelerating rate, and keeps them alive by surgical gymnastics which go beyond anyone's patience but the victim, the doctor, and the people who expect soon to be on the operating table themselves; in a civilization where compassion is of political use and is stratified in welfare programs which do not build a better society but shore up a worse, in a world whose ultimate logic is war—because in a world of war all overproduction and over-population is possible since peoples and commodities may be destroyed wholesale, in a breath, a world of such hyper-civilization is a world not of adventurers, entrepreneurs, settlers, social arbiters, proletarians, agriculturists, and other egocentric types of a dynamic society, but is instead a world of whirlpools and formlessness where two huge types begin to re-emerge, types there at the beginning of it all: Cannibals and Christians.

We are martyrs all these days. All that Right Wing which believes there is too much on earth and too much of it is second-rate, all of that Right Wing which runs from staunch Republicanism to the extreme Right Wing, and then half around the world through the ghosts of the Nazis, all of that persecuted Righ Wing which sees itself as martyr, knows that it knows how to save the world: one can save the world by killing off what is second-rate. So they are the cannibals—they believe that survival and health of the species comes from consuming one's own, not one's near own, but one's own species. So the pure cannibal has only one taboo on food —he will not eat the meat of his own family. Other men he will of course consume. Their virtues he will conserve in his own flesh, their vices he will excrete, but to kill and to elimi-

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nate is his sense of human continuation.

Then come our Christians. They are the commercial. The commercial is the invention of a profoundly Christian nation—it proceeds to sell something in which it does not altogether believe, and it interrupts the mood. We are all of us Christians: Jews, liberals, Bolsheviks, anarchists, socialists, Communists, Keynesians, Democrats, Civil Righters, beatniks, ministers, moderate Republicans, pacifists, teachinners, doctors, scientists, professors, Latin-Americans, new African nations, Common Marketers, even Mao Tse-tung. Doubtless. From Lyndon Johnson to Mao Tse-tung, we are all Christians. We believe man is good if given a chance, we believe man is open to discussion, we believe science is the salvation of ill, we believe death is the end of discussion; ergo we believe nothing is so worthwhile as human life. We think no one should go hungry. So forth. What characterizes Christians is that most of them are not Christian and have no interest left in Christ. What characterizes the Cannibals is that most of them are born Christian, think of Jesus as Love, and get an erection from the thought of whippings, blood, burning crosses, burning bodies, and screams in mass graves. Whereas their counterpart, the Christians—the ones who are not Christian but whom we choose to call Christian—are utterly opposed to the destruction of human life and succeed within themselves in starting all the wars of our own time, since every war since the Second World War has been initiated by liberals or Communists; these Christians also succeed by their faith in science to poison the nourishment we eat, and the waters of the sea, alter the genetics of our beasts, and break the food chains of nature.

Yet every year the girls are more beautiful, the athletes are better. So the dilemma remains. Is the curse on the world or on oneself? Does the world get better, no matter how, getting better and worse as part of the same process, or does the world get better in spite of the fact it is getting worse, and we are approaching the time when an apocalypse will pass through the night. It is certain at least that we live in a time which interrupts the mood of everything alive.

Thomas R. Brooks

## Collective Bargaining in Education

Our neighborhood school, P.S. 29, is 75 per cent Negro and Puerto Rican, mostly Puerto Rican. The kids are a tough lot, coming from the tenements off Columbia Street, which runs south from Atlantic Avenue along Brooklyn's waterfront into Red Hook. Bill Pyles is one of three men out of a total staff of 35 teachers. The three men were the only teachers in the school to respond when the United Federation of Teachers struck the New York school system in 1960 and again in 1962.

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Some months after the second one-day walkout, Pyles was saying what a pleasure it was to teach. He was asked why this year was so special. "I think it was the strike," he answered. "The kids saw teachers on television, fighting. We were tough like truck drivers and Jimmy Hoffa. We won the strike and won the kids' respect. So they listen when we teach."

Bill Pyles' class wasn't the only group to sit up and take notice. The UFT's achievements were impressive. On November 7, 1960, 6,000 teachers struck for a day to secure a representation election. The union won the election and the right to represent the city's 44,000 teachers in bargaining. Some foot-dragging over money matters on the part of the Board of Education led to a second strike on April 11, 1962, which pulled out 20,000 teachers and won the UFT its first contract. New York City became the first major metropolitan school district in the country to engage in formal collective bargaining. The UFT grew in membership from 7,500 in 1960 to its present strength of 33,500. Success in New York stimulated activity elsewhere. The American Federation of Teachers, which had been dawdling along for years with a membership of 40-50,000, began to win bargaining elections in other big cities: Cleveland, with 5,200 teachers, Detroit with 9,700, and Philadelphia, with 11,000, as well as in a number of smaller cities, bringing AFT membership to 115,000.

Taking note of this "resurgence of militancy" among teachers, *The New York Times* editorialized: "There was mounting evidence that teachers are no longer content to rule only the classroom to which they are assigned. They want a hand in the assignment and a voice in the policy that controls their professional lives. They are not asking to run the schools, but they want their views heard and heeded." Radical intellectuals, who over the years had become increasingly disenchanted with organized labor, began to talk of a revived labor movement and of the possible impetus to white collar organizing. Gus Tyler, labor intellectual and assistant president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, noted that teachers were "more verbal" and were used to dealing with governments. These factors, he said, "may contribute to the development of a more political labor movement." The AFL-CIO, which had not noticeably aided teachers in the past, provided organizing services and loaned out organizers for AFT campaigns. The Industrial Union Department also provided help and has given over a half-million dollars to date. In a speech to the 1963 AFT convention, Walter P. Reuther issued a call for a one-million member AFT.

AFT organizing campaigns also became one of the few instances of real cooperation between the civil rights and labor movements. In Philadelphia the 500-member AFT local found it could not win collective bargaining rights without the support of Philadelphia's more than 3000 Negro school teachers. Bayard Rustin was brought to Philadelphia to speak and help organize; Martin Luther King, A. Philip Randolph and James Farmer were also involved in winning Philadelphia for the AFT. This civil

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rights-labor coalition is effective both ways. For several summers now the AFT has sent teacher volunteers to staff Southern Freedom Schools. Last summer, Arthur Reece, a Detroit teacher and AFT vice president, coordinated Freedom School-AFT efforts.

The New York success also led to a change in the leadership of the AFT. At the 1964 convention in Chicago, militants ousted a moribund leadership and elected New York's Charles Cogen president. Cogen, a veteran teacher-unionist, was chairman of the Social Studies Department at Bay Ridge High School in Brooklyn at the time of his election to the AFT post. First elected head of UFT in 1951, Cogen developed a young and vigorous secondary leadership group within UFT, including 36-year-old Albert Shanker, now UFT president, and David Selden, now Cogen's assistant. This group led the New York local in its stunning 1960 and 1962 successes. Obviously, it is hoped that Cogen's leadership will do the same kind of job nationally—will, indeed, make collective bargaining a fact of life in every American school system.

Although Cogen immediately predicted that the AFT would have 200,000 members before his first term expired in 1966, the AFT has settled down for the long haul. Delegates at the 1965 convention last August set up a one-million-dollar organizing fund to be financed through a dues increase, the sale of bonds to members and contributions from sympathetic unions. But the raising of funds is only part of the task before them. According to the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, there are over 1.5-million teachers employed in the public schools. For a union of 110,000 to reach these would be expensive and difficult enough even without the rivalry of a larger, well-financed teacher organization. The National Education Association has a *direct* membership in the national organization of about 940,000; over 90 per cent of the nation's teachers are either directly enrolled in the NEA or in state and local organizations affiliated with the national body. The ten to one membership ratio between the NEA and the AFT has been steady for more than a decade and has not been changed by the AFT's recent gains. NEA's national budget runs almost $10-million a year. Of this, $417,000 is earmarked for "Federal relations" and "legislation" —euphemisms for lobbying that gives the NEA considerable strength in Washington on educational matters. Even with AFL-CIO help it is doubtful that the AFT can hope to offset this advantage in the near future. Meanwhile, one can say that the country's teachers are already organized though perhaps not unionized.

Nonetheless, the AFT does offer the teacher considerable collective bargaining expertise. It also offers the teacher a measure of participation—both within the union and school systems—lacking in the NEA scheme of things. The AFT is a democratic union with a vigorous and vociferous membership. There is no hesitancy about asking for —and getting—the floor at the monthly Delegate's Assembly meeting of the New York UFT, for example. No one as far as I could see felt any reluctance about telling UFT officers how to run the union. As a staff member told me in an aside, "They carry democracy to

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the point of anarchy." When it comes to negotiations the UFT leadership is —from the professional collective bargaining point of view—burdened with too many demands since it must present all that are formulated by the representative bargaining committees. The results of bargaining must be approved by the members. There is not much question but that those teachers within the AFT are unionized.

It is also clear that teachers are moving in the same direction. Traditionally, the NEA eschewed affiliation with any labor organization, collective bargaining, or strike action. But under pressure from its members and in face of competition from the AFT, the NEA has drifted into what amounts to collective bargaining in its relationships with a growing number of school boards or administrations. In 1962, the NEA convention adopted a resolution declaring that the "NEA insists on the right of professional associations . . . to participate with boards of education in the determination of policies of common concern, including salary and other conditions of employment."

The NEA still condemns strikes as "unprofessional," preferring the use of what it calls "sanctions" to bring recalcitrant school systems into line. Where the NEA finds "sub-minimal" educational conditions, it puts sanctions in effect. NEA members are not supposed to apply for jobs within such blackballed school systems. Those members already working within such a system are encouraged to find jobs elsewhere as soon as their contracts run out. Sanctions have been imposed 15 times since the NEA chose this "ultimate weapon" in 1962. The best known was the state-wide sanction against Utah schools in 1964 which began with a two-day walkout. The sanction was lifted when the State Legislature granted an additional $24.6-million in state aid to the schools over a two year period. Currently, the NEA has imposed a state-wide sanction on Oklahoma. It has offered the state's 22,000 teachers a list of vacancies elsewhere and has barred its members from seeking employment in Oklahoma until teacher salaries—the state average is $5,160 a year, $1,000 below the national average—come up to par.

Since NEA members didn't hesitate to stop work in Utah, the differences between sanctions and striking may ultimately disappear. Other differences between the NEA and the UFT may also disappear. NEA policy directives, for example, condemn teacher coverage under state labor laws, dispute procedures and the like as "professionally inappropriate." But NEA has not hesitated to use such laws on occasion. In Detroit, the NEA chapter petitioned for state labor board mediation of teacher grievances. (This move, in the end, did not do NEA much good since the AFT won the representation election. Still, the NEA made the request.) In Philadelphia, too, the NEA violated another long standing tenet to demand exclusive recognition in an effort to fend off the AFT. The drift is unmistakable. This year NEA claimed formal "written professional negotiation agreements" in nearly 364 school systems.

What explains this new movement towards collective bargaining and the growth of teachers' unions? The answer, I think, is found in the revival of teaching as a respected profession,

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a revival that has been reinforced by the teacher's own militancy. Before World War II, teachers enjoyed considerable status; the work was steady, the pay (comparatively) good and the vacations three months long. But after the war, when even truck drivers achieved steady work and increased pay through the exercise of collective bargaining, teaching declined severely in status and in professional emoluments. The three months vacation became a nightmare that had to be filled with a second job; moonlighting, too, became common. The number of male teachers fell off as non-teaching jobs proved more attractive. All this, incidentally, accompanied a decline in the big city school systems. Things were a little better in the suburbs where more money was offered to lure teachers away from the city. Still, even outside the city, the trend toward larger, more central school systems entailed a greater centralization of decision-making, a greater distance between administrator and teacher, and more bureaucracy. In the end, no one listened to the teacher, neither child nor parent, administration or community.

No one would listen until teachers struck. New York became a symbol of what could be accomplished through hard bargaining. Teacher pay has gone up; class size has gone down. Three years ago, there were 1,500 high school classes with more than 38 pupils in each class. Today, under the new UFT contract, there will be only 36 students in high school classes except where there is a lack of space. "Cliff-hanger" negotiations this fall ended in a $68-million package that means a $100 rise in wage minimums to $5,400, effective October 1, 1966, and a $900 rise in maximums, in two steps, to $11,500. "This makes us tops for a big city," says Shanker. The new contract, he added, "ensures the teacher's right to proceed to higher salaries automatically. No administrator can withhold the advance." It takes 13 years to hit the top scale. Still, says Shanker, the maximum is a realistic one. "In some other communities the scale looks good at the top. But no one is on it. In New York City, however, one-third of the teachers are now earning nearly $12,000." In 1960, the starting salary in New York for elementary school teachers was $4,800 with a top in 14 steps of $8,300. The new scale moves New York ahead of Los Angeles with its starting salary of $5,500 and a top of $11,100; Washington, D. C., with a minimum of $5,350 and a maximum of $10,000; Chicago with a starting scale of $5,300 and a high of $9,450; and Philadelphia with a start of $5,300 and a top of $9,000. The national average is $6,235.

What impact has the new militancy among teachers had on the labor movement and on white collar and professional organizing? As far as I can tell, the answer, through no fault of the teachers, is not much. Organizers who are trying to organize clerical and white collar workers tell me that it is nice to say, "Look at the teachers," but considerably more useful to talk about automation, phony paternalism and the growing distance between employee and boss in the white collar glass-front factories.

Social workers, however, have been inspired by the teachers' success. But here, too, emulation is not overly significant in terms of numbers. The New York City welfare workers' strike

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of 1964 is the major example. The closest parallel to collective bargaining developments within teaching is found within nursing. There are no rival organizations competing for the loyalties of the nurses; but the basic development is the same—a well organized profession slowly taking on the appurtenances of trade unionism.

Teachers and nurses are public service employees. And it is here that the clues to the future of teacher unionism are to be found. There are some 8.5-million local, state and federal government employees, comprising roughly 16 per cent of the total U. S. labor force. Significantly, while both the AFT and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees are fast growing unions, the fastest are those of Federal employees —the independent National Federation of Federal Employees and the AFL-CIO's American Federation of Government Employees. The reason for this growth is simple: implementation by government departments of President John F. Kennedy's Executive Order No. 10988 of January, 1962, which provided for recognition of, and collective bargaining by, organizations of Federal employees. Note, too, that the AFT's major successes—New York and Philadelphia—took place in cities whose governments also encourage collective bargaining. Recently, Connecticut, Michigan and Wisconsin passed legislation favorable to collective bargaining by public employees. The Wisconsin law is already several years old, and the AFT and the NEA are deeply engaged in recognition rivalries. The NEA, in fact, won an important victory in Milwaukee. All this suggests that the next great spurt in teacher organization will take place as state and local legislation bodies adopt codes favoring collective bargaining among public employees. All the public service employee organizations are currently devoting much time to lobbying for this at state legislatures and city councils.

Meanwhile, there is the rivalry between the AFT and the NEA to consider. At the moment it is indeed advantageous; teachers, in effect, may shop for the best deal and the bidding by both sides has the effect of raising pay and standards. But this can backfire with the public, especially that portion of it that ultimately pays the bills. It was public reaction, in a way, that forced the AFL and CIO unions to call a truce some time before merger. Moreover, I do not see how an organization the size of the AFT and with its necessarily limited resources can realistically hope to supplant the 100 year old NEA. Obviously, despite current postures, accommodation will one day be inevitable. Peaceful coexistence between the AFT and the NEA certainly is not impossible, nor is an ultimate division of labor. The NEA's success as a research and service agency probably cannot be surpassed by the AFT, just as the NEA may find it cannot outdo the AFT on the bread and butter issues.

Whatever happens, however, collective bargaining is in education to stay. As Shanker told me, "We may not end up organizing all teachers, but the teachers are going to end up with a union-like movement."

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# THE DRAFT: REFLECTIONS & OPINIONS

*A selection of comments on attitudes toward the draft: Prof. John Seeley of the Brandeis Sociology Department discusses the problems faced by professors in grading students when lower grades may mean being sent to Vietnam; N. Gordon Levin and Henry Pachter comment on a piece by Michael Walzer, "Democracy and the Conscript" (January-February 1966* DISSENT*), and Michael Walzer replies. Each writer speaks, of course, for himself; if others want to join in, we'll keep the discussion going.*—Ed.

## 1. What Is the Responsibility of the Professor?

John R. Seeley

. . . I take it for granted that in a modern society we are all implicated in moral responsibility for what the state of which we are citizens does or doesn't do. Thus remediable urban blight, the neglect of retarded children, the exiguous nature of our foreign aid, the errors and insanities of the cold war all lie as matters of guilt to be shared at everyone's door. But this recognition—even if valid—may merely act to paralyze action, since neither can anyone know everything nor do everything.

Two characteristics seem to lift out of the vague general class of the deplorable those things that call upon one for action:

a. The moral magnitude of the atrocity involved—so that, regardless of one's proximity to the action, the duty of effective protest is urgent. Thus the butcher, baker or candle-stick maker may not lightly pass over his responsibility for concentration camps—or the lynchings of Negroes, or the use of cattle prods on men.
b. Proximity to the atrocity—regardless of magnitude—so that a Chief of Police (or any policeman) bears peculiar responsibility for police brutality.

Where both magnitude and proximity are involved, action is not to be evaded except at the price of demoralization.

The new "selective service" deal adds, I believe, to the element of proximity for professors. The prior situation was very roughly such as to make University students generally exempt from military conscription as long as they were students in good standing. (Even then instructors would be marginally implicated by moving persons into and out of that status.) The new situation roughly means that all students who fall into some portion of the lower tail are to be differential-

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ly exposed to draft risk. (They may, even if in the risk group, be exempted by virtue of a test performance that purports to order "capacity," those of alleged higher capacity for University work being continued in their temporary exemption.)

The upshot is that an academic grade comes to function, like a medical report or rating, in two ways instead of one. It is (so far as possible) an objective report of objective conditions that is intended to help the subject of the report to take appropriate action as he sees it. (Thus, "Your vision is 10/20" and "You are doing C-work in Calculus" are functional equivalents.) But it also now is a signal to someone other than the subject as to the permissibility of an operation of a given sort upon him. (Thus, "You are doing C-work in Calculus" and "Dear Draft Board, you should investigate whether to call up this young man" are now functional equivalents.)

I shall note in passing, though it is not the main thrust of my argument, what this does to the teaching relationship. We have abandoned "Do good work or risk a whipping." We now have "Do good work or risk a killing—of or by you."

It is also not clear to me entirely—though this is not central to my present concern—that Professors have any more right to "publish" grade data about students than they have to publish other things they learn about students in class or office hours or in "informal interaction." (Or, incidentally, than students have similar rights to publish about professors). . . . We are thus now a much more intimate part of the selection system (if we continue to grade or otherwise rate and publish or permit publication by informing someone, such as a Registrar, who does publish. We are perhaps as proximate as whoever in Nazi Germany "objectively" determined the fraction of a man's ancestry that was "Jewish."

The next question is, doubtless, whether or not the Vietnam war is an atrocity, and, if so, of what degree.

But a prior question might be whether the relevant opinion is that of each professor for himself, the professorial consensus or preponderance of opinion of all professors for each of them, or the opinion of each student involved—or some other opinion, e.g., "the University's" or "the nation's."

I am inclined to dismiss all opinions as relevant except as matter for the informed and sensitive conscience of every professor in his aloneness. The opinion of such aggregates as "the nation," "the University," "the professorate" is, I think, non-existent except as a name for a Gallup Poll (dubiously meaningful) average. (Even, if it were unanimous, I do not think it would have a proper effect to bind or loose conscience.) I am disinclined to allow relevance in this question to the student's opinion, because even if he wants us to rate him for this purpose (either so as to get in or stay out) we each have still severally responsibility for our complicity in this use of us. (Besides, he has ways to get in, and perhaps, to stay out, without us.) So I am left with the conscience of each (after appropriate study and reflection) as the only cogent opinion.

For those who can conclude that the Vietnam war is a just war and/or

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otherwise morally permissible, there is a narrower problem, but still, I should think, a problem: are they willing to enter so intimately into a process whereby they in effect load the dice for and against the survival of their several students? And are they willing (and able) to function professionally in a situation wherein they thus hold life-and-death-probability powers over the students? I should think that on both counts there might be well-grounded and deep qualms.

For those who can conclude the Vietnam war is an unjust war and/or otherwise morally impermissible, I should think there would be further problems. Those who do so conclude might comfort themselves by the thought that by collaboration they are helping to keep the "best" students out of the wicked enterprise. But this is dubious, for "best" here means not morally or humanly best, but only best in terms of academic performance. And even were they assisting in saving the best till last, or for a little longer, they might well feel cast in a role analogous to the morally doubtful and agonizing one of the *Judenräte* in the period of "the final solution" in Germany.

What is open to us—alone or together (those who reach similar conclusions)? We might act to secure changes in the rules or their application. But that will take time, and meanwhile we are embroiled. We might refuse to be professors under such an invasion or misuse of our role. We might cease to grade at all (except privately for information for each student) or we might grade everyone equally high. Or we might wash our hands, asking what is truth? or justice? or appropriate professional conduct?

I am sufficiently certain of the merit of my argument at this point to stand on it, though I am sure I must soon take a stand. I therefore earnestly solicit the opinion of my colleagues in the student bodies and on the faculties. I would like them to take counsel with each other and with me. At the very least, I would like the matter to become a subject of widespread and sufficiently public debate. How can it be done—at least, the last. (It is patently undesirable, I think, that things should be quietly worked out by Selective Service and the University Presidents' and Deans' holding company, as at present.)

Where can the question be raised by whom in what way so that its urgency for us comes clear? Or is it neither a problem of sufficient importance nor an indicator of where we are drifting for want of such debate?

## 2. Uses and Abuses of Civil Disobedience

Henry Pachter

In discussions about people who wish to refuse the draft, one frequently hears the argument: "These demonstrators are chicken." Such attempts to disqualify the protest as not idealistically motivated seem to me utterly irrelevant. Of course the person who objects to being

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drafted does so because he values his life more than any values he is being called on to defend. He does not claim to be a hero, but to follow reason. And it takes a lot of courage to follow reason when everybody expects you to act like a hero. The reasonable man says: "Look here, I admit I am a coward to the extent that I will not be stampeded into saying I am a hero just to prove that I am no coward." The draft objectors need not claim that their protest is disinterested; on the contrary, they should admit that their motives are solidly materialistic and selfish—either that going to war would inconvenience them, maybe even expose them to danger, or that they cannot bear to inflict death on others. This, it seems to me, is the legitimate motive of every one who uses all the legal loopholes to avoid the draft.

Among the loopholes available to draftees, there is one which some wish they had thought of earlier: religious objection to military service. Some people now discover that they have hated war all the time, and they seek exemption on the ground of their pacifist philosophy. The law prescribes that you can claim this exemption only if you have previously given proof of your earnestness. You must be a bona fide member of a religious group that rejects military service and you must have submitted to the discipline of such a group, have undertaken some rigorous and demanding task that tested your earnestness.

At present this loophole seems to me both too narrow and too wide. It permits people to claim religious exemption on the sole ground of membership, though they may never have shown any real concern for the works of peace; but it also excludes people who have made enormous sacrifices for peace, yet whose cause happens not to qualify.

Yet another group of draftees consists of new converts; their abhorrence of warlike pursuits emerged only when the board of their neighbors was breathing down their necks. Some among them may actually be described as pacifist; but if they had not felt strongly enough to engage in pacifist activities earlier, they can hardly claim to be legally excused from serving. No matter how strongly they now feel that war is immoral, I think it immoral to defer the disclosure of such feelings until it helps in securing deferment. If their repugnance of service is really as strong as they now say it is, let them engage in civil disobedience and face a court; let them risk going to jail as proof of their sincerity.

The usual answer is: Why send them to jail? Would it not be more reasonable to let them do some useful work? Could they not volunteer for medical service, research, Peace Corps? By all means, provided the work entails risk, danger and discomfort comparable to combat conditions yet is not connected with the war effort. I think these two conditions follow from the assumption that a principle is involved for these persons. They want to show that their refusal to serve is not motivated by fear or convenience. They also wish to establish that they are against war as such. Otherwise they would merely be asking *personally* to be left out of the dirty part of it.

There is another group of objectors

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who claim that they may not be strictly pacifist and would defend their country in case of attack, but who fail to see the present war in such a light. They feel that the present war is imperialist or colonialist, that it is conducted in a fashion unbecoming to a great democracy, and that it may bring us close to atomic extinction. In other words. these objectors feel that it is their duty to reserve judgment in each individual case and, if they find their government in the wrong, to agitate against the war.

If this is really their feeling, then the worst thing they could do would be to remain silent. To ask for a legal exemption from the draft on the ground that you ought to act as a defeatist, while simultaneously asking for admittance to some labor camp or medical chore is immoral. It amounts to freeing another man for military service and to asking the Government to allow some people legally to opt out of the war. They should be allowed to save their personal "conscience," but if their objection were truly political, they would seek a political, not a legal recourse.

The only way to opt out politically is to disobey: that is, to defy the majority and the law. There is only one way to proclaim that a particular war is wrong, and that is by declaring that the government is wrong, that its laws are wrong and that its system is wrong. I know of no historical example where a government protected its enemies from the consequences of its policies. Bertrand Russell and Ramsay Macdonald went to jail; Liebknecht was sent to the front; Gramsci was on the Lipari Islands; Lenin was in exile; Friedrich Adler killed Prime Minister Stürckh.

The determination of civil disobedience, or the hardship one is ready to take upon oneself, obviously will vary with the strength of one's feelings about war in general and with one's evaluation of this particular war. You may encourage mild draft-dodging. You may engage in desperate acts of sabotage and disobedience. But one thing you cannot do: you cannot practice civil disobedience with the aid of the law; you cannot be a rebel with the consent of the Government.

The right to advocate a different course of policy for the Government, even the right to advocate resistance, is guaranteed by the Constitution. But there is no civil right to disobey a law of which one disapproves. One fights for specific civil rights, such as the right to vote, to live where one pleases etc., but disobedience itself is no civil right, even if the law in question is immoral. The fight against an immoral law may require revolutionary action, civil disobedience or even violence; but the right to start such a fight is a moral, not a legal right. If the right to revolution were a civil right, the word revolution would have no meaning. Likewise, unless he abandons citizenship, no one has a right to opt out of a national enterprise, and still less can the Government be forced—other than by revolution—to guarantee, let alone to organize such opting-out.

The Government does not recognize a citizen's right to undo its policies or to obstruct the implementation of its laws other than by testing their validity in court or by changing them through prescribed constitutional pro-

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cedures. In certain cases an officer of the Government may give a citizen the order to commit deeds that are repugnant to his moral instincts or to recognized standards of human conduct. Then the citizen must fight back, and often he may have to defend himself before a military court. Resistance against the draft is often advocated on the ground that the citizen *may* get into such a conflict once he has been enrolled in the Army. Or the right to refuse the draft may be claimed on the ground that those who are not actually engaged in immoral actions may release others to commit them. Finally, the right to opt out may be claimed on the ground that war itself is the crime that is repugnant to individual conscience.

To all these arguments I answer that dissent from the present war or refusal to do any military service can only be conceived as an act of resistance, disobedience, defiance or defection. Such acts create a revolutionary right, but they cannot be claimed under any notion of civil or constitutional rights within the system that is at war. Whether an individual citizen will avail himself of this moral right to revolution, will depend on the strength of his conviction, on the nature of the system and of the war, on the kind of command he is objecting to, maybe even on the nature of the enemy and, last not least, on the strength of the majority and the possibility that it may be right.

## 3. Suppose the Draft Were "Democratized"

### N. Gordon Levin

In his "Democracy and the Conscript" [DISSENT, January-February 1966] Michael Walzer argues that democratization of the draft would be a path to increased political dissent in an America likely to continue for some time to fight limited wars in the undeveloped world. It is this central concept—the notion that a truly universal draft would mean more internal dissent from cold war policies—that I find it difficult to accept. Rather, it seems to me that a democratization of the draft would be most apt to further legitimize and strengthen the already nearly impregnable American cold war consensus.

Walzer argues that "A genuinely universal draft would almost certainly be a major restraint upon peacetime warmaking, if only because it would mean that the sons of politically articulate and effective classes would die in greater numbers . . ." Yet, it should be noted that the sons of the politically articulate and effective classes are almost certain to become officers in large numbers and to be well integrated into the ideological and institutional military framework. Moreover, why is it not more psychologically correct to assume that the death of one's son in battle is most likely to lead one to support the war effort for which that son gave his life? This is especially true in an ideologically uniformitarian society such as America, in which the vast majority of the people

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of all classes begin with a pre-disposition of support for anti-revolutionary police actions. Ultimately, it may well be true that it would be easier to create internal opposition to a police action conducted by an alienated "foreign-legion" type of professional army than to foster domestic dissent against such a limited war conducted by a truly representative democratic army. Indeed, the very creation of a democratic army could be a cause championed by a radical right anxious to coerce dissident intellectual/student elites.

I also find it difficult to share Walzer's concern that military adventurism on the part of professional soldiers is a real problem in America. It seems to me that often those of us opposed to American foreign policy make far too much of the CIA, the military rightists, and the French-Algerian analogy. In so doing we miss the crucial point that the main drift of America's cold war policies in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic have been firmly supported by leading civilian decision makers of both parties. For every Curtis Le May there is a Maxwell Taylor who is largely indistinguishable, in his restrained but unwavering support for the cold war, from his civilian counterparts in the Departments of State and Defense. Moreover, it also seems to me chimerical to hope that a more democratic conscript army would be measurably less brutal or repressive abroad than a professional or volunteer army. To be sure, draftees are unlikely to torture in the direct and personal style of foreign legion types, but the recent performances of American draftees in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic suggest they will shoot at and drop napalm on whomever they are told.

In sum, the central problem for socialist advocacy of a democratic draft in contemporary America, is that a movement towards social justice in this particular area would have, I fear, the result of further strengthening the national cold war consensus. It would seem to be a more logical radical task in America to attempt to heighten rather than to pacify the contradictions between social justice at home and the main drift of our foreign policy. Perhaps only in countries such as Sweden and Switzerland—where the armed forces are designed for self-defense only—can a democratic draft be an unambiguous socialist demand.

## 4. Options for Resistance Today

### Michael Walzer

Gordon Levin and Henry Pachter may be right. Both their arguments serve to point up, as my piece on the draft perhaps did not, the extreme tensions under which American radicals now live, the difficult choices we face. If I argue here that they have compounded the difficulties, I don't do so with any great confidence.

If we lived in a society whose wars we could reasonably hope would be defensive and nothing more, we would then be unequivocal advocates of a

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democratic army. But it is not absurd to suggest, as Gordon Levin does, that the army which fights a war like that in Vietnam ought not to be democratic, ought indeed to be alienated from civil society, so that both it and its war can one day be repudiated by that same society. Why turn such a war into a democratic struggle? Traditional socialist goals are perhaps irrelevant to contemporary America—irrelevant or worse, since their achievement at home might well increase support for unjust wars abroad. This suggests a strange dialectic: we ought to oppose the draft and support military professionalization (now) in order to "heighten the contradictions." Maybe; but I am still inclined to believe that the most fruitful "contradiction" would be that which arose between a democratic army and a distant, gruelling, degrading and unpopular war. Whatever support the cold war has among the American people, this particular hot war has very little. And it will surely have less and less as more and more Americans, from a wider and wider social spectrum, are called upon to fight it. We ought not to assume that democratic armies can in fact fight such wars, or that democratic societies can sustain them. It is just here, when it comes to the killing and the dying, that the cold war consensus is bound to be weakest. But perhaps I overestimate the reluctance of democratic citizens to kill and to die. We shall see.

Henry Pachter's comment makes life seem even darker. He argues that the modern democratic state offers only two alternatives to its citizens: obedience to the will of the majority (or to the will of any government legally authorized to speak and presumed actually to speak for that majority) or revolution. And revolutionaries, he rightly insists, should not expect to be patted on the head. But this is a very stark set of alternatives and one with which we ought to be dissatisfied. Between obedience and revolution there are in fact a multitude of political possibilities which—obedience being (sometimes) immoral and revolution (for the foreseeable future) impossible—we are obliged to explore. And even if revolution were a possibility, we might choose some other form of opposition, for it is simply not true that the "only way to proclaim that a particular war is wrong [is] by declaring that the government is wrong, that its laws are wrong and that its system is wrong." To claim that there are and ought to be options short of this is, perhaps, to call into question the logic of state sovereignty, which Pachter defends so forcefully. But that logic is after all not so inexorable as he suggests. Democratic states have recognized all sorts of limits on the legitimate coercion of individual citizens. They have admitted the existence of *rights* where conservative theorists saw only the danger of social disorder and radical theorists only inevitable contradictions and ultimate revolution. Surely we have no reason to oppose further experiments aimed at loosening the hold of the state over its citizens. Only if such experiments were to prove impossible would it be necessary to confront Pachter's dilemma.

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# BOOKS

Robert Coles

## "Sickness" and Rebellion: East and West

WARD 7, by Valeriy Tarsis. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. 159 pp. $3.50.

The chaos and bestiality, some of it under medical auspices, that characterized Nazi totalitarianism has been rather thoroughly documented. Having lost the war, Germany was exposed to the scrutiny of outsiders; and anyway, the Germans have always been passionate archivists. In contrast, the crimes of Joseph Stalin and his state are more notorious than precisely realized. With the death of Lenin and the removal of Trotsky, the more rational and humane traditions of Communist ideology were destroyed by a canny despot the extent of whose arbitrary cruelty has yet to be appreciated.

The refinements of Soviet terror, its trials and methods of exile, its grotesqueries—the "doctor's plot," the suicides that mask murder, the public confessions—have one by one reminded anyone willing to pay attention just how blind the self-righteousness of some leftists can be: it took words from Khrushchev himself to persuade them that, all along, the reported horror had not simply been capitalist slander.

In this regard I have continually noted the reluctance of certain American radicals to discuss the implications of Stalin's increasingly punitive orthodoxy for the civil rights movement or other protest groups now in action. During those long nights of argument we had in the Mississippi Project of 1964, and again in 1965, the mere mention of Communism was suspect; not necessarily Communist infiltration of the civil rights movement, but even the history of Communism in Russia. The subject was thought to be irrelevant at best; more likely, its mention was a bogus issue used to discredit or weaken the present-day radical spirit at work in America.

"We don't care what happened in Russia, or in the 30's between the liberals and the Communists. Those are dead issues. We care what is happening right here, in this state." Those words, on one of my tapes, are characteristic. Yet I found it curious that young people who spoke such words could ignore the terrible paradox that in 40 years a revolution made in the name of sweeping social and economic justice might well have been responsible for more deaths and more suffering than 300 years of unabashed slavery in America. The youth I have quoted again and again recalled for me the awful facts of the Negro's historical exploitation, yet the spectacle of an enormous bureaucracy abroad relentlessly swallowing every opposition, even seeing opposition where it isn't, bothered him very little. "To

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tell the truth," he once told me, "it's far away from me. I don't know exactly what's going on there. Who does? Even when it did hit home, when Khrushchev's admissions were made public, I couldn't get too involved. We've got a different problem here, and plenty to do to solve it, without worrying about all the other problems in the world."

But I am not so sure that the terrors instituted by Stalin's bureaucrats and technocrats are at all irrelevant to the concerns of American radicals. More and more those radicals are beginning to realize how devious their enemy is: the faceless army of organization men—and they exist not only in business—who may be nervous with one another, but together maintain a formidable solid guard over the richest industrial enterprise in the world's history. The nature of industrialized society, particularly as it is increasingly automated and influenced by computers, makes American and Soviet society much more similar than either John Reed or J. P. Morgan ever dreamed. As today's American radicals struggle hard and with rising vexation to catch a handle that somehow will enable them to deal forthrightly with major social and economic issues—and not only waning historical ones, or regional ones, no matter how important they be—it must be clear that Kafka was perhaps the most profound social critic of this century. As one student working with me in a Boston slum put it recently, "It's like a nightmare here; everyone checks on everyone else—the owners, the police, the welfare workers, the politicians, the racketeers—but no one knows what is really going on, or who runs what, or why."

In Valeriy Tarsis' book *Ward 7* the Soviet side of the nightmare is made rather fearfully clear. It is a slim book, and only half-heartedly pretends to be a novel. In fact it is an autobiographical fragment by a Russian author confined to an asylum, presumably for his bold and outspoken criticism of the regime.

The narrative—in contrast to the ideas expressed—is not easy to follow, even though the book has been nicely translated into lean, idiomatic English. In form we meet up with a series of sketches: some describe the various wards; some the doctors and their views; some "the patients," who actually are often as not disenchanted with "socialist" life and anxious to escape it by suicide, by flight abroad, or at the very least by evasion of all sorts of responsibilities—the draft, work, the writing of appropriate "socialist realism." What binds these people together is the central figure, Valentine Almazov—actually Tarsis, the fiercely defiant writer who will risk death by saying no to a system he deplores. It is Almazov-Tarsis who sees the tyranny that afflicts his fellow "patients," and it is he whose vision and passion we feel—in everything, from his particular sensitivity to nature and the weather, to his sardonic humor, so very much like Chekhov's. (*Ward 7* is meant to follow Chekhov's great story *Ward 6* as another description of man's ability to brutalize people by labeling them "sick.")

In several respects this book is very important indeed. It gives us an intriguing glimpse of Soviet psychiatry. It is well known that for a certain kind of dogmatic "Marxist" psychoanalysis has little to offer. Certainly there are no psychoanalytic training

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centers in Eastern Europe, even though Freud was really much less hostile to Lenin's achievements than some believe. In point of fact he rather interestingly applauded the goals of socialism, even as he wondered whether their achievement would founder upon the mortal weaknesses and excesses of political leaders—and the "ordinary" men who follow them.

If the mind—including the unconscious—is largely denied a life of its own, but is always considered in relation to the material forces of history and society, patients will largely be those who in some way fall into difficulty not with themselves or their families but with the social order. They will be treated by various suggestive maneuvers, or by Pavlovian "conditioning," their troubles being thereby "extinguished." All else failing, they will be confined and worked, but not approached as particular people with problems needing their own, quite special solutions.

Tarsis spells out quite pointedly the differences between such a view and those generally held in the West by engaging several Russian psychiatrists in discussion. One of them is influenced by the "French school" and clearly in danger on that account of becoming a patient himself. Instead he becomes disenchanted and sad—in the few lines that describe his manner we can feel Pasternak's presence. The author shows that a totalitarian regime is always the unsatisfied busybody: even a psychiatry that has fallen in line ideologically cannot keep free of political interference. The patients are not treated but herded together and often punished. The doctors themselves are frightened, mutually suspicious, and without a free hand to practice as they will.

It all seems far distant, awful and at times hard to believe, particularly when Tarsis becomes bitter enough to make one pause a bit about his condition: perhaps he is sicker than he knows, his unsparing anger and episodic arrogance but a manifestation of "deeper" illness. Who can know, particularly in a secretive police state? I am sure there are Soviet psychiatrists who would deny the view of mental hospitals this book provides —and remind us that it is, after all, a patient who addresses us.

Yet, there is much in the book that sounds and feels credible to me—enough to make me think of the somewhat parallel if less dramatic and oppressive conditions that prevail in certain areas of American psychiatry and society. In the South for years I saw civil rights workers arrested, then charged with "delinquency" and sent away for psychiatric observation; some were quite openly called insane by judges or law officers, if in less formal or neutral language. All over this country peace demonstrators are called names that essentially skirt the border between illness and non-conformity. A recent article in the *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* (Autumn 1965) reports on the daily climate in one of the better American mental hospitals. A summary of two years of research describes the ward routine as one of "making the patients quiet, orderly and properly subservient to attendants." "Degradation rituals" were described, "where attendants reminded patients of their low status by teasing them, insulting them, making them do ridiculous

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tasks, making pets of some and ignoring others." There is more, much more, and it is chilling. Anyone who has worked in a mental hospital has seen his fair share of uncaring, self-important, thoroughly vulgar administrators and mean, insulting or useless procedures. I fear Tarsis could find material for another book, a *Ward 8,* right here in a society far less committed to a single inclusive ideology.

Perhaps the real issue is larger than that of Bolshevism or even the everyday cruelty in hospitals anywhere. In the Middle Ages those afflicted with insanity were predominantly allowed their freedom. Only gradually did the idea dawn upon men that those who are "fools" or "madmen" deserve confinement. (See the excellent book *Madness and Civilization* by Michel Foucault.) We need continuing scrutiny of hospital wards, in both the East and West. We also need to place our notions of "mental illness" (and "health") in an historical perspective they so far lack.

ROBERT COLES

## A View of How It Was

STARTING OUT IN THE THIRTIES, by Alfred Kazin. Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1965. 166 pp. $4.95.

Having no intention of irony, I would say right off that the most impressive quality of Alfred Kazin's memoir of his young intellectual manhood is its non-authoritativeness. Authority, or rather its simulacra—heavy, unassailable opinions, *correct* readings of the archives, documented pronouncements of damnation or absolution—these are what we have come to expect from radicals recalling their pasts. But Kazin, while in no sense a daunted or even a modest man, is engaged here in something other than the validation of personal history or the establishment of a superiority to the waywardness of events. He is not trying to pin politics in one belated fall. What he is doing, in this elegantly written, mostly cool and always uncontrived book, is chiefly addressing himself to the questions of what politics meant to him from the beginning of the time when it could mean anything at all beyond rumor, what literature meant to him and, especially, what literature and politics meant to one another.

These concerns effectively date Kazin's enterprise, fixing it within cultural chronology, in that epoch bounded at one end by the very early thirties and at the other by the close of World War II. Before and after that, literature and politics are largely separate, attracting different minds, being put to different uses, being asked to perform dissimilar miracles. Only in the sense that writers are today speaking out again on public issues and that a new nihilism and new anarchy are employing a putative literary impulse, or more accurately literary gesture, for vague political purposes does the present age bear any resemblance to Kazin's time of

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youthful commitment. But today politics and literature, considered in relation to one another, have nothing of the intensity, the mutually reinforcing passion as of two armies encircling a common enemy, they had for him.

The narrative begins in June, 1934. The depression is still in high tide, Hitler has been in power for more than a year. Kazin is nineteen, a student at City College; precocious, feverish, at once aggressive and somewhat self-pitying, he has "no prospects whatever," the times are against him and besides he has not yet learned how to act. "Although I was a 'Socialist' like everyone else I knew, I thought of socialism as orthodox Christians might think of the Second Coming—a wholly supernatural event which one might await with perfect faith, but which had no immediate relevance to my life."

Everything after this opening declaration proceeds to trace the onset and deepening of a feeling of relevance. He quickly identifies the source, which was the same for him as for many members of his generation. Literature was what made you able to take politics with true seriousness, what made it possible to think of public events within a spiritual dimension. "I looked to literature," he writes, "for strong social argument, intellectual power, human liberation . . . salvation would come by the word, the long-awaited and fearfully exact word that only the true writer would speak." (A few years later, in Madison Square Garden, he was to come closest to seeing the dream incarnated; André Malraux is telling a Loyalist rally about his experiences in Spain and for Kazin "he was magnificently the writer as speaker, the writer as the conscience of intellectual and fraternal humanity, the writer as the master of men's souls.")

Kazin's own career as a writer begins abruptly in that hot summer of 1934. On an impulse he goes to see John Chamberlain, at that time an important figure on the cultural scene; no radical, Chamberlain was nevertheless energetically rocking the boat as a belligerent and iconoclastic critic for the *New York Times.* Impressed by the young man, Chamberlain sends him, with a recommendation, to the *New Republic,* whose offices were then in New York. And there, through the persons of Malcolm Cowley and later Otis Fergusson and even more through the general atmosphere of excitement and *pertinence* surrounding the magazine, Kazin discovers how to fuse his germinating interests and desires, discovers writing as an efficacious act. "To my surprise—I had never thought of criticism as an occupation—I suddenly found a way of writing, a form, a path to the outside world."

The path leads to a participation in the literary life and struggles of the thirties, which revolved so crucially, in that era of absolutes and exhortations, around the question of what literature was for, with its corollary question, how could life justify literature. "What young writers of the thirties wanted," Kazin writes, "was to prove the literary value of our experience, to recognize the possibility of art in our lives, to feel we had moved the streets, the stockyards, the hiring halls into literature—to show that our radical strength could carry on the experimental impulse of modern literature."

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That it didn't accomplish these things; that the thirties—self-conscious, dogmatic, backed to the wall by a despair for whose relief only the most noble-sounding attenuations of the spirit and the most socially apocalyptic diagnoses of the imagination would serve—gave us instead scarcely any permanent literature apart from the work of its outsiders, like Faulkner—is the subject perhaps of another kind of book, but it is not Kazin's. For there is no pressure in his book to account for the times, to breast-beat or bluster, to grade himself or the period. This is why he almost never tells us what he was writing during these years (except that towards the end we learn he is finishing his huge study of our literary past, *On Native Grounds*); the word "memoir" is what matters here —what it felt like, what memory tells him how it felt like to come of age at a time when men and ideas were as never before or since so mortally joined, with all the confusion, intellectual peril, exaltation, sense of purpose and dread of purposelessness which that meant.

The book is anchored in men, therefore, not in abstract ideas. Kazin's descriptions of many of the central literary figures of the decade—representatives, agents and unduplicable personalities as they simultaneously were—are almost invariably sharp, accurate and, more important, achievements in the fusion of character and events, the forcing of personal impression to yield up meaning in wider spheres.

He describes John Chamberlain, who lived on "notions of things," as looking like "Charles Augustus Lindbergh shyly starting out alone for Paris, like Gary Cooper at the end of a Western modestly warding off a kiss." He speaks of Otis Fergusson: "sandy, caustic . . . a desperate man, a sorehead, a fatalist," and of Bertram Wolfe, "Intellectual, saintly and nervous, like a harried American version of Mahatma Gandhi." He meets James T. Farrell: "The force of the documentation, the unwearying repetition of ugly, crippling details, had an intellectual ecstacy about it." And William Saroyan, whose "insistence that he was strong about everything, his own man all day long, more his own man than anybody else—you bet your life!—was defiance, as he liked to say, of meaningless, uselessness, unimportance, insignificance, poverty, enslavement, ill health, despair, madness." And finally, as the book draws to a close, he encounters Mary McCarthy, who sums up an age and points to a new one: "a wholly destructive critical mind, the first writer of my generation who made me realize that it would now be possible to be a radical without any idealism whatsoever."

Before that, as one of his subsidiary themes, he has traced the decline of idealism in more strictly political contexts. These are the most familiar, most traditional elements of the book: his discovery of the tyranny of radicalism when it substitutes historical "laws" for human possibility, the discovery, really, that the disasters of the age have engendered a "cure" more deadly than the disease. Never a Stalinist, he still has to move in his education from absolute faith, a dream of time as succorer and servant of the will, to skepticism and sobriety of vision. "History was going our way," he writes at one point, "and in our

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need was the very lifeblood of history . . . wherever I went now, I felt the moral contagion of a single idea."

But the idea was far from single, and those who held any part of it could not guarantee their segment of truth or be justified by it. "All my life," he has finally to confess, "I had lived among people who had seemed to me beautiful because they were the dust of the earth; I had taken literally the claim that they identified their sufferings with the liberation of humanity. I now saw that the ideologues among these people had no moral imagination whatever, and no interest in politics. They were merely the slaves of an idea, fetishists of an ideology; the real world did not exist for them, and they would never understand it."

The whole thrust of the book is to oppose, for the self's integrity and the age's true perspective, moral imagination to fetishism, slavery and righteous authority. In this regard nothing in Kazin's memoir is more moving than the passages that deal with his Jewishness, his Jewish sense of mission and apocalypse, his specifically Jewish commitment to literature as social fulcrum and politics as humanizing action, and, above all, his detailed, physical, unsentimental, Jewish knowledge that life and ideas are often, perhaps usually, sources of mutual betrayal.

Early in the book he tells of feeling that "to be Jewish was to be at the heart of things. History was preparing, in its Jewish victims and through them, some tremendous deliverance and revelation." But later, in a marvelous act of counter-balance, he abandons the transcendencies, the rhetorical giantism, the quest of the imagination for motifs it can feel dignified by, and dignifies instead what his imagination has had in its purview all the time. In a portrait of a woman cousin who lived with his family and meant a great deal to him as a child and youth he gives us one quintessential figure of the thirties, that age when even more radically than our own the self felt abandoned and deprived, yet struck back with madness, aspiration, fervor and insistence that something had to count and something had to come.

"Sophie knew that the world owed her something—love, a home, a husband, and from the edge of her bed she waited fiercely, her arms implacably crossed, her bulging eyes mad with rage and expectancy, waiting for *him* to come, for her life to reach its consummation." He doesn't come, and this particular life is consummated in waste and pain. But its truth remains, like the truth of the era which enclosed it—not to be extrapolated, codified or congealed into judgment, neither object lesson, nor argument nor data for theories. Men lived in the thirties, Kazin is saying, with peculiar stresses, particular faces and one or another kind of relationship to the age which bred them and asked them to respond to it. His book is as admirable a record of how they did that as any we have been given.

RICHARD GILMAN

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## The Ante-Bellum South as an Underdeveloped Society

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SLAVERY, by Eugene D. Genovese. New York: Pantheon Books, 1965. 304 pp. $6.95.

In *The Political Economy of Slavery,* Eugene Genovese has made an original contribution to our understanding of ante-bellum Southern history. His contribution lies not so much in the discovery of new facts as in placing familiar materials in a fresh theoretical context. Genovese is the first to systematically apply to the pre-Civil War South the theory of economic backwardness developed by the particular Marxist school which the late Paul Baran dominated. Genovese's book, in short, is a critique of the socio-economic structure of the slave South, much in the same manner as a theorist of the Baran persuasion would analyze contemporary Honduras.

Much of the book is taken up with Genovese's largely successful efforts to prove that, in comparison with the American North and West in the nineteenth century, the slave South was economically and socially a backward region. Southern agriculture is subjected to a searching analysis revealing tremendous inferiority to the West in terms of crop diversification, use of fertilizers and/or mechanization, farm labor skills, and soil use. Genovese argues that Southern dependence on staple-producing plantation agriculture, manned by inefficient and exploited slave labor, condemned the region to a low level of effective internal demand for industrial goods, to a lack of urbanization, and to an overall indusrial and commercial backwardness:

> Plantation slavery so limited the purchasing power of the South that it could not sustain much industry. That industry which could be raised usually lacked a home market of sufficient scope to permit large-scale operation; the resultant cost of production became too high for success in competition with Northern firms drawing on much wider markets. Without sufficient industry to support urbanization, a general and extensive diversification of agriculture was unthinkable. Whatever other factors need to be considered in a complete analysis, the low level of demand in this plantation-based slave society was sufficient to retard the economic development of the South.

Although Southern cotton earned money in the world capitalist market place, these profits, in Genovese's estimation, did not find their way back to the Southern masses, black or white. That increment from the sale of Southern staples in the world market, which did not remain in the North to finance industrial and transportation ventures, returned to the South in the form of planter profits, to be used for non-productive luxury expenditures. Genovese portrays the planter elite as a pre-capitalist slave-owning class, possessed of aristocratic anti-capitalist values, and bitterly hostile to any efforts to modernize or industrialize the South. Nor, claims Genovese, did the planters' participation in the world market for their staples make them capitalists or the South bourgeois—any more than the existence of Amer-

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ican banks in Managua which facilitates Nicaragua's sale of bananas in the world market, makes Nicaraguan society capitalistic. Genovese makes self-sustaining industrial growth the *sine qua non* for a society to be called bourgeois. By portraying the weakness and subservience of the Southern industrial bourgeoisie to the planters, prior to 1860, Genovese buttresses his thesis of the ante-bellum South as a pre-capitalist backward society dominated by an agrarian elite.

Finally, he argues that, unwilling to permit industrial-capitalist progress, and, driven to seek new soils for the expansion of their inherently wasteful agrarian system, this dominant planter class drove the South into a war for independence in 1860 —to save its pre-bourgeois social order. This is Genovese's original thesis of the slave South as an underdeveloped society. His formulation both illuminates much of what has formerly been obscure in the causation of our Civil War and provides fresh insights into the socio-economic structure of the Old South. Ultimately, however, this thesis may raise almost as many problems as it solves.

The essence of the Baran-Genovese conception of underdevelopment is the notion of bourgeois failure. Baran put the issue brilliantly in an early article entitled "On the Political Economy of Backwardness":

> While in advanced countries, such as France or Great Britain, the economically ascending middle-classes developed at an early stage a new rational world outlook, which they proudly opposed to the medieval obscurantism of the feudal age, the poor, fledgling bourgeoisie of the underdeveloped countries sought nothing but accommodation to the prevailing order. Living in societies based on privilege, they strove for a share in the existing sinecures. They made political and economic deals with their domestic feudal overlords or with powerful foreign investors, and what industry and commerce developed in backward areas in the course of the last hundred years was rapidly moulded in the straitjacket of monopoly—the plutocratic partner of the aristocratic rulers. What resulted was an economic and political amalgam combining the worst features of both worlds —feudalism and capitalism—and blocking effectively all possibilities of economic growth.

There are certain inherent theoretical difficulties in the uncritical application of this concept to the slave South, which Genovese cannot entirely surmount with statistics on Southern agricultural, urban, and industrial retardation.

To begin with, Genovese ignores the fact that, unlike any of the underdeveloped societies for which the Baran thesis was created as an explanatory model, the American slave South had a bourgeois rather than a feudal tradition. The Southern cultural ideal of the eighteenth century was primarily that of the liberal Jeffersonian yeoman farmer, the independent agrarian capitalist, and not the pre-capitalist ideal of landed reaction. Moreover, he also tends to underplay the existence of pervasive liberal democratic political institutions for all Southern *whites*, in his effort to make the ante-bellum South look like a contemporary pre-bourgeois backward society. Thus Genovese ultimately fails to consider the extreme artificiality and fragility of the effort of nineteenth century planters to impose pre-

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capitalist values on a society whose underlying traditions were liberal.

Actually, Genovese gives us little or no evidence to support his constant assertions that the planter class exemplified the values of pre-bourgeois feudalism. There is no effort to reconcile the surface anti-bourgeois ideology of the nineteenth century planters with their generally bourgeois social origins. To be sure, Genovese shows the planters' opposition to certain forms of industrial capitalism in the slave South; but he fails to draw the conclusion that the very necessity for such opposition raises serious questions as to the real backwardness or pre-capitalist quality of the ante-bellum South. Certainly the agrarian elites of Baran's underdeveloped societies—societies which unlike the slave South lack a liberal tradition—have never feared subversion by indigenous industrial capitalism.

In Genovese's analytic universe no distinctions are really possible between the slave South and Brazil in the nineteenth century. Yet such distinctions are necessary, and they go to the heart of the difficulties inherent in Genovese's thesis. Nineteenth century Brazil *would* fit perfectly all of Genovese's notions of a backward slave society dominated by a reactionary landed elite. Brazil never experienced a liberal phase of development, and remains backward in Baran's terms to this day. *The point is, however, that European feudal values were transferred to Brazil but not to the American South.* In Brazil a plantation-slave economy, producing staples for the world market, was created under the ideological and institutional influence of Iberian Catholic feudalism. In the American South, by contrast, a plantation-slave economy was grafted artificially onto a basically dynamic bourgeois foundation. In this sense, the slave South is really much closer to the relatively advanced liberal-racist societies created by European migrants in South Africa and Rhodesia than it is to the more feudal slave societies of Latin America. Although the agricultural and industrial indices showed the South backward vis à vis the American North and West—had Genovese compared the ante-bellum South to nineteenth century Brazil, he would probably have found that the American South was already far ahead of Brazil in economic development.

The ultimate issue is one of analytic perspective. The Baran thesis illumines much about the slave South; yet by applying it in an often parochial and/or procrustian manner, Genovese partly vitiates his analysis. Fully to understand the place of the slave South in world history, one would have to fuse Genovese's insights with those brilliantly pioneered recently by Louis Hartz and others in *The Founding of New Societies.* Hartz's study points the way beyond parochialism to the integration of American history with the larger comparative historical analysis of the manner in which European culture was transferred to new societies in North America, Latin America, Africa, and Australia.

N. Gordon Levin

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## Oswald's Mother

A MOTHER IN HISTORY, by Jean Stafford. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966. 121 pp. $3.95.

Jean Stafford was sent to interview Mrs. Marguerite Oswald by *McCall's*, the ladies' magazine. Miss Stafford does not pretend to examine in detail the case of Lee Harvey Oswald or to analyze the unhappy history of the Oswald family. Her technique is haphazard, mingling long speeches from Mrs. Oswald with arch commentary on Mrs. Oswald's home furnishings, and paragraphs apparently designed to demonstrate the writer's superiority to her subject.

Miss Stafford needn't have bothered. The dialogue rings true, and gives a picture of Mrs. Oswald sufficient to repel and disturb the reader without any need for added comment.

One of Mrs. Oswald's favorite theories is that her son was "an agent of the United States," whereupon the assassination of President Kennedy is transformed into an act of heroism:

> 'It's been in many articles that President Kennedy was a dying President, that he had Atkinson's disease, which is a disease of the kidney, and we know that he had three operations on his back and that he would have been a lingering President. For security reasons, we could not have a lingering President, because of our conflicts with other nations. . . . Now it could be that my son and the Secret Service were involved in a mercy killing. . . . If he was dying of an incurable disease, this would be for the security of our country.'

We are not surprised when Miss Stafford discovers a copper scroll on Mrs. Oswald's wall:

> MY SON—
> LEE HARVEY OSWALD EVEN AFTER HIS DEATH HAS DONE MORE FOR HIS COUNTRY THAN ANY OTHER LIVING HUMAN BEING
> MARGUETITE C. OSWALD

Such a sentiment is not inconsistent with the rest of Mrs. Oswald's conversation, which consists of a self-glorifying and self-pitying defense of herself and her son. Mrs. Oswald seems to consider her life a holy mission. "After all, I *am* responsible for two Presidents." She hints that she has fresh evidence bearing on the assassination, but she does not reveal it. What she does reveal is an extremely disturbed personality, replete with paranoid delusions of grandeur. Her performance only enhances the plausibility of her son's having acted upon similar delusions. Although the evidence remains circumstancial, Mrs. Oswald has taken a firm place among the circumstances.

JEREMY LARNER

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## What Passes for Labor History

TENTACLES OF POWER: THE STORY OF JIMMY HOFFA, by Clark R. Mollenhoff. New York: World. 415 pp. $6.50.

HOFFA AND THE TEAMSTERS: A STUDY OF UNION POWER, by Ralph C. James and Estelle Dinerstein James. Van Nostrand. 430 pp. $6.95.

Clark R. Mollenhoff's book reduces the problem of corruption in American society and the labor movement to the level of a TV script with Mollenhoff cast in the role of a journalistic Elliot Ness. The author does not concede the legitimate function of trade unions like the Teamsters, and he seems to be unaware that most of its members are ordinary Americans. He hardly criticizes the trucking industry and the American political system of favors and deals; his villain is Hoffa.

Mollenhoff unwittingly supports Hoffa's argument which is in part the basis for his appeal to the Supreme Court. Mollenhoff writes, "The Justice Department made the decision to seek an indictment in Nashville to avoid the Detroit political jungle that Hoffa knew so well. In addition, the Nashville Tennessean had just hired a new editor—John Seigenthaler, who in 1961 and 1962 had served as an administrative assistant to Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy. That was an assurance of . . . editorial support in the trial area."

Mollenhoff gives the misleading impression that many unions are simply rackets and fails to convey the complexity of trade unionism as a social institution.

Professor Ralph C. James' and Estelle Dinerstein James' book might have passed for a good scholarly spoof, were it not meant to be a serious analysis of a major union. Occasionally the book led me to wonder where reportage ends and fantasy begins. For example: "As recently as 1962, I heard him [Hoffa] order the beating of a man 3000 miles away, and on another occasion I heard him instruct his cadre on precisely how to ambush non-union truck drivers with gunfire—to frighten them, not to kill."

These incidents supposedly happened at a time when Hoffa told everyone that he was under constant F.B.I. surveillance and that his phone was being tapped. Not even his worst enemies in Detroit have ever accused him of such stupidity and carelessness. And if Hoffa had reverted back to the old methods of his early slugging days, how could a decent citizen look on, without trying to protect people from beatings and gunfire?

The Jameses offer the fantastic theory that Hoffa is the product of "Trotskyism." In a chapter entitled "Trotskyist Impact on Hoffa," the authors argue that Farrell Dobbs, Trotskyite leader, and one-time Teamsters Union organizer, provides ". . . the key to understanding the *emergence* of James Hoffa and the origins of many of his *methods* and *beliefs*." In the 1930s, the Jameses tell us, ". . . Hoffa sat at Dobbs' feet and learned the tools of his trade. . . . Hoffa has an intuitive Marxist picture of the capitalist economy: automation—overproduction — unemployment — more auto-

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mation — more overproduction — more unemployment—and so it goes."

The authors offer no documentation for this distortion of Hoffa's life and beliefs, and of American labor history.

The Trotskyists have certainly not laid claim to Hoffa. But there is a basis of sorts for the Jameses' theory. In the 1950s Jimmy Hoffa suddenly began to refer to the importance of the over-the-road drivers and their strategic role in the Teamsters Union —a concept upheld by Farrell Dobbs and his Trotskyist colleagues in Minneapolis in the 1930s. This new stand of Hoffa's in the 1950s was, however, only an attempt by Harold Gibbons and other advisers to change Hoffa's image from a union executive who talked about his "labor business" to a militant labor leader.

There is a basic and obvious difference between the concept of "leverage power" of over-the-road drivers which was developed by Dobbs and Ray Dunne, and Hoffa's power concept. The Trotskyists based this concept on working-class strength and solidarity. Hoffa's "power" concept involved two elements totally alien to Trotskyist practice and theory: the big trucking interests and underworld allies.

For over twenty years Hoffa has received remarkable accolades from big business in Detroit and throughout the Midwest. The authors do not mention that the biggest banquet ever seen around Detroit was given for Hoffa, in 1956, with General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler officials and other members of the Establishment present. Nor do they analyze the significance of the *Wall Street Journal's* repeated surveys and articles which speak of employers' fears of the effect Hoffa's possible retirement may have on labor relations in the trucking industry. The authors fail to give a critical analysis of his long-time dalliance with the Republican party, his anti-strike philosophy and repeated attacks on "strike happy" Walter Reuther and the UAW, or Hoffa's violent blasts against Communism and the student peace movement.

A well-rounded book would have to deal with Hoffa's principle of the "fast buck," his views on the "labor business," and evaluate Hoffa's success in organizing, handling funds, and bargaining.

One might consider the three major cab drivers' elections lost in recent years because Hoffa backed such notorious figures as Joe Glimco of Chicago, and Hoffa's brutal but unsuccessful raids on the Communications Workers of America. The Teamsters' membership has certainly grown in recent years. But it is hard to say how much this growth was due to the expansion of large companies and how much to the efforts of locals. Might the Teamsters not have been even more successful, had they not been handicapped by the effort to defend Hoffa's record?

The authors make out a strong case for Hoffa's ability at the bargaining table by limiting their analysis to his impact on truck drivers' wages and comparing these to wage raises in other industries. But Hoffa is also the president of over 1,000,000 Teamsters who are not over-the-road or strategic drivers. How did they fare under Hoffa's leadership? With over 150,000 union contracts in the United States, most of which include automatic wage increases, how great is the difference between Hoffa's achievements and those of other labor leaders? These questions need probing before a sound appraisal of Hoffa can be made.

B. J. Widick

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# LETTERS

## On the Moynihan Report

Editors:

I'm damned if I can reconstruct the reasoning that went into the editorial caveat preceding Laura Carper's sensitive article in your last issue. Certainly not "controversy." The piece in answer to Hannah Arendt (also an excellent article) has involved many more acrimonious exchanges than has the Moynihan Report. Why the hedge?

If anything, a much sharper criticism is indicated. As a document, *The Negro Family* is part of that tendency in American sociology that has characterized low income, low status groups in our society variously as authoritarian, punitive, friendless, incapable of deferring gratification, hostile, submissive, having feelings of political futility, being more suggestible, having a demonological interpretation of evil forces and (stripping us of our last positive stereotype) lacking sexual satisfaction. On and on. It represents faulty social science and conservative political solutions.

Part of the reason for these statements stems from simple mistakes that any reasonably competent anthropologist would have avoided. The observer walks into a subculture with which he is not familiar, compares its conduct with middle-class norms and reaches conclusions that are very often wrong and always invidious.

Fortunately, this tendency is being reversed lately by such writers as Frank Riessman, S. M. Miller and Herbert Gans, among others. Riessman, in particular, has done monumental work in this field, as his *Dissent* article reveals.

A generalized sympathy for another's plight is no substitute for accurate observation and sound analysis. Some observers see the dispossessed in our society as having a sinister quality, mindless and cruel. Other more benevolently disposed observers see them as only benighted and stunted. I think neither is true. There are skills and resources within this group that we are just beginning to recognize. No class is without some of those negative attributes that might be deterrent to the achieving of a democratic society. On the other hand, no class has a monopoly on virtue.

In an earlier issue *Dissent* carried this quote from Jean Malaquais: "Once upon a time there was a myth named *le proletariat*. Though obviously a male, the myth was believed to be pregnant with child—a well formed socialistic baby true to the Scriptures. Baby being long overdue, the congregation of the faithful first became skeptical, then frankly disgusted." If yesterday's myths are today a source of embarrassment, the corrective is not creating a new myth attributing only barrenness, at best, to the dispossessed.

BILL GOODE, Ass't. Director
Leadership Studies Center
INTERNATIONAL UNION, UAW

## Nihilism and "Marat/Sade"

Editors:

Lionel Abel's piece on "Marat/Sade" [*Dissent*, March-April 1966] was excellent. I think his distinction between the powerful theatricality of Brook's production and the weakness of the drama Weiss wrote is accurate and his subtle analysis of the audience's response to the madness dead right. May I make some observations stimulated by his ideas?

The character of the audience attending the play at the Martin Beck Theatre seems to have changed. Harold Rosenberg saw it after it had been running for two and a half months and had become fashionable; his audience seemed to him to be a fairly standard Broadway audience, and they reacted in a standard Broadway manner; he was astonished by Abel's comments on "the audience." I saw it during the first week, when people were there for their own reasons; the audience was by far the most peculiar I have been a member of, and it reacted quite as Abel reports his audience reacted, with spontaneous enthusiasm (and also with some loud boos). I found the reaction of "the audience" as troubling as he did, but I also found the perform-

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ance troubling, as he apparently did not.

In a bungled, only partially realized way, the performance gave a strong image (the visual elements of the performance were much the most striking) of a mind mad à la Freudisme. The asylum director and his two ladies, all three foolish and stupid, strong only because they have social force on their side, represent a feeble superego. Sade and Marat represent a divided ego: the character Sade, though legally mad, is not represented as mad in the play, any more than Marat is, though the supposed actor who plays Marat in the play within the play is a madman, a fact the play proper rapidly loses sight of. In the interminable speeches, Sade is a solipsist and Marat a limitless rebel, and the two characters do not affect one another in the slightest, any more than those two philosophical positions, extremely held, can ever affect one another in reality.

The fact that the play within the play is supposed to have been written and directed by Sade the solipsist contributes to the notion that this is an image of a mad mind; but the possibilities inherent in all this are never exploited by Weiss, if indeed he ever recognized them. The id is represented by the many mad people—sexuality by a satyriac, religion by an apostate in a straitjacket, killing by a sleepwalker, and so on down among figures of undifferentiated disorder. Once again, nothing very coherent comes of all this; nevertheless, the theatrical image was potent enough, I would guess, to account for some of the violence with which the audience reacted; it encouraged one to respond sympathetically to the madness.

Abel's insight into the intellectual sources of this nihilistic exaltation of madness is very illuminating. Applying his terms to the play—when the God who has validated reality ceases to exist, one may become a limitless solipsist like Sade, and when belief in human perfectibility dies, one may become a limitless rebel like Marat. It strikes me as true that the combination of revolutionary impulses with loss of faith in either God or human perfectibility has generated the enthusiasm with which so many of the audience greeted this play as it reconciles the two. Not reconciles them: gives an image of their coexisting in the same mad mind. But finally he goes too far in his argument, and I quarrel with him.

"The final deliverance of this epoch is that God does not exist and that human life cannot ever be perfected and hence that the madman, the criminal, and the dope addict are not inferior to the philosopher. That is why it is so difficult to argue with a young student against taking drugs, not to speak of dissuading him from doing so. Can one say to him that God exists? No. Can one say to him that society can be perfected? No . . . Then can one say that the philosopher is better than the drug addict? No. Or better than the criminal or the madman? Again no." So far so good. Here, pretty obviously, is Lionel Abel talking with a bright, dislocated student.

But then he goes on. "It is the vague recognition, I will not call it knowledge, that no one to be respected can answer these questions affirmatively which emboldens our contemporary youth and makes them so rash and so sad." Now W. H. Auden says that God exists. Why is Abel to say Auden is not to be respected? There are people whom I respect who do not believe either that God exists or that society is perfectible but who can and do assert that the philosopher is better than the drug addict, the criminal, or the madman. Not everyone needs the ultimate metaphysical certainties under him to make his way through the world. Abel is like a hedgehog in a swamp; but there are foxes who spot the swamp and circumvent it. Every nihilist is a metaphysician balked, and it is of course true that many of the best young people are metaphysically miserable—as are many of their elders. But by accepting the assumption that only on such metaphysical foundations is civilized life possible, Abel undercuts his own position. If he means that last statement to be true—not just an accurate formulation of a certain attitude, but true, the fact of the matter—then why is he so surprised or troubled by the response to "Marat/Sade"? What, more than taste, kept him from responding in

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the same way? Perhaps he means the statement to apply only to the disaffected young, but the tone of the passage is at the very least ambiguous in this regard.

This issue matters because nihilism is quite widespread nowadays, a force of some power, and it needs to be located as accurately as possible and to be defined lucidly. Such a definition demands that the definer not confound his own principles with those he is defining, for this is something, like evil, which to define is to oppose. Abel has made a considerable contribution to the definition but there is more to be done. It is essentially a conservative job, and perhaps a *Dissent* contributor finds it a bit awkward to take a conservative position. But these nihilists—the young intellectual disaffected nihilists—operate outside the visible political spectrum. They aren't just against the evils of this society or against that evil society; they are against society itself. They are drawn towards the sterile solipsisms of madness and drugs or the issueless pseudo-rebellions of criminality and indiscriminate sexual indulgence; everything is as good as everything else so let's destroy what we can, especially distinctions and above all hierarchy of every kind. Against this general configuration, which is not uncommon, it is necessary for any political radical to take a position which is relatively conservative: he must preserve the *idea* of society and affirm the value of social order and even of those goods, however battered and distorted, of our own dreadful society. "Democracy is the worst possible form of government," as Churchill said, "except for all those others." Perhaps Abel is right and such conservative assertions are not possible unless they are metaphysically founded on belief in God or in human perfectibility; I doubt it; in any event, he has not proved his case and he has to, once he raises the question. As the matter stands, he has drawn the line in such a way to include himself intellectually in the definition of an attitude which he repudiates emotionally — understandable enough, but bad for definition.

GEORGE P. ELLIOT

## On "Protivism" in Soviet Thought

EDITOR:

*"Protivism"* is a term coined by Lewis S. Feuer to characterize the state of modern Soviet philosophy and sociology. (*Dissent,* Winter 1965.) According to Feuer, the Russian word *"protiv,"* meaning "against," is used repeatedly by Soviet scholars to denounce undesirable ideas emanating from the West and is "the most characteristic word in Soviet philosophical essays."

I would like to dissent from Professor Feuer's view that *protivism* plays a negative role in the development of Soviet philosophy and social sciences. We should be cautious in accepting the view that political and ideological requirements determine the progress of scholarship. It is more correct to say that political and ideological possibilities channel the ways by which scholarship can be advanced, but do not always determine such developments. *Protivism,* contrary to being an entirely negative phenomenon, is such a channel for the development and possible future flowering of Soviet philosophy and sociology.

The contributions of *protivism* can only be appreciated in a perspective of the Stalinist period, with its isolation from the outside world and, in philosophy and the social sciences, isolation from their own past. In the post-Stalin era Soviet citizens have revealed an insatiable hunger for information about their country's history and the conditions in the outside world. With Stalinism on the defensive, there still remained the problem of channeling outside information in a way that would not disturb the foundation of the Soviet system. There was only one traditional solution to this problem: an ideological critique of Western ideas which would provide an opportunity for summarizing these ideas, with the excuse that they were unknown to the Soviet reader. This has justified a flood of *protivist* literature on all conceivable subjects designed to satisfy Soviet readers' curiosity about the outside world.

Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin and some Stalinist institutions, at the 20th Party Congress, added a new element to

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the traditional practice of *protivism.* Without having to fear for their lives, scholars now were permitted to examine the dust-covered books of the past and to become acquainted with the foreign literature of the present. Although they had to communicate their knowledge in a critical tone, for the first time they had the privilege of discussing these previously tabooed subjects with their students and the general audience. Traditional ideological *protivism* now turned into "creative debunking" with the primary purpose of imparting new information.

Thus, one of the first critical monographs on the work of pre-Revolutionary social scientists was devoted to Maksim Kovalevsky, the Russian Empire's first and most important pioneer of objective social science and the teacher of Pitirim Sorokin. The strategy of creative debunking makes it now possible to bring Kovalevsky's work to the attention of the younger generation who until now had heard only his name. *Protivism* has also served to acquaint Soviet readers, if only slightly, with the major representatives of functionalism, existentialism, psychoanalysis, and other contemporary ideas.

The strategy of creative debunking permitted Soviet sociologists to reach a new level in their *protivist* writings. It is now possible to encounter serious and constructive appraisals of American and generally Western ideas, which may be called "constructive *protivism.*" Such criticism is still very rare and not always easily distinguishable from other *protivist* literature. A serious critique, however, differs from the usual ideological attack and can be identified by the range and depth of knowledge of non-Soviet literature, by the ability to recognize significant and influential Western scholars and the separation of important scholarly works from obscure ones. Such serious criticism also contains a plea for dialogue and debate between Soviet and non-Soviet scholars.

This new "constructive *protivism*" is expressed in the criticism of the concept of industrial society, in a recent article by Mitin and Semenov. They write that Soviet sociologists agree with Western scholars that socialist and capitalist industrial societies have many similarities which distinguish them both markedly from non-industrial countries. But they contend that we must also look at the crucial differences which separate various industrial countries. While criticizing the Western concept of industrial society, Mitin and Semenov perform a useful service to sociology in general by calling for the development of a more concise typology of industrial societies. As this could only be accomplished with the cooperation of our Soviet colleagues, their efforts should be welcomed.

It is a matter of academic conjecture how strong a role the Party plays in imposing *protivism* on Soviet scholarly activity. I tend to take the view that, although *protivism* originated out of Party policies, it has developed beyond the limits desirable to most Party functionaries. Whatever the sources of *protivism,* one can well sympathize with the Soviet scholars who are forced to resort to such subterfuges in order to advance their work. But in view of the recent historical past, *protivism* is more of a blessing than a curse.

ALEX SIMIRENKO

### Power in Vietnam

Editor:

I found Marshall Sahlin's report: "The Destruction of Conscience in Vietnam," in the January-February *Dissent,* essentially a clear artistic interpretation of certain alarming facts . . . The ultimate goal is to be effective in controlling the hearts and minds of people, but it is uncertain what they are to believe in. The shaman, as America, and the evil spirit, as Communism, struggle for possession of the soul of the Vietnamese people; from these powerful, conflicting pressures the Vietnamese soul, so to speak, inherits a thinking and affects disorder, at least temporarily, what we call insanity. Americans are exporting a part of their own culture: freedom means my life is determined by a pervasive social manipulation. This manipulation is to preserve or bring certain groups to positions of power and privilege. It is unfortunate Sahlin says so little about who has power and privilege in Saigon today.

HENRY A. HICKS

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